THE NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS

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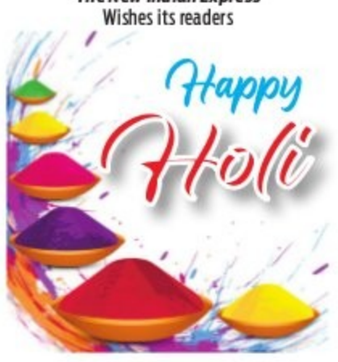
The New Indian Express
Wishes its readers



AT LEAST 137 ABDUCTED SCHOOL CHILDREN FREED IN NIGERIA

They were abducted over two weeks ago from their school in Nigeria's northwestern state of Kaduna by a band of motorcycle-riding gunmen

ABDUCTIONS PUT PRESSURE ON PRESIDENT

The Nigerian Army claimed the children were freed during a rescue operation on Saturday. President Bola Tinubu, under pressure to end abductions which has become common in the conflict-hit northern region of the country, had vowed to rescue them without paying ransom. Sources said the abductors were hiding in the region's vast and ungoverned forests

OVER 280 STUDENTS WERE TAKEN: TEACHERS

- It is not clear how many students were kidnapped. Teachers have said over 280 pupils between the ages of eight and 15 were taken. The government had initially said all of them had been freed
- Bandit gangs routinely attack communities and carry out mass kidnappings for ransom in northwest and north-central Nigeria | P9

1,400

STUDENTS HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED FROM NIGERIAN SCHOOLS SINCE 2014

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

I.N.D.I.A bloc to hold mega rally over Kejriwal's arrest

Oppn parties' joint protest on March 31 in Delhi's Ramlila Maidan

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

UPPING the ante against the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the Opposition INDIA bloc said on Sunday that it will hold a mega rally at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan on March 31 to protest against the BJP government's alleged targeting of political rivals using federal agencies.

Announcing the decision at a joint press conference in Delhi, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Delhi minister Gopal Rai said all INDIA-bloc parties will hold the rally to safeguard the country's interests and democracy. Top leaders of several opposition parties including the Congress, TMC, CPI(M), Shiv Sena (UBT), and Samajwadi Party are expected to attend the rally.

"The Prime Minister has been acting like a dictator and suppressing democracy to arrest Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal. Whether it is Hemant Soren in Jharkhand or Tejashwi Yadav in Bihar or the CM of West Bengal, all are being slapped with fraudulent cases to silence them ahead of the Lok Sabha polls," said Rai. He alleged AAP leaders are being prevented from holding protests and Kejriwal's family has been placed under house arrest. "Our party office was sealed despite the Model Code of Conduct being in place. Now the Congress's accounts have been frozen, so they won't be able to run a campaign for the polls," Rai added.

> **Democracy and the country are in danger. All INDIA bloc parties will take part in this 'maha rally' to safeguard the country's interests and democracy**
>
> AAP leader Gopal Rai

Hitting out at the BJP, Delhi Congress leader Arvinder Singh Lovely exhorted the public to join the proposed rally.

The Opposition leaders also alleged Kejriwal was arrested after the State Bank of India was forced to reveal the donations the BJP received through electoral bonds. One of the approvers in the Delhi liquor policy case got bail after sending money to the BJP, they alleged.

"There's no level-playing field for the opposition parties anymore. Our leader Rahul Gandhi has been trying to save the democracy and we will stand by the AAP to save the CM," said Lovely adding that they are hopeful that the authorities would allow them to hold the rally.

CPI(M) leader Rajiv Kunwar said the fight is against the dictatorial rule of the Modi government.

Rallying behind Kejriwal, several leaders including Congress, TMC, and CPI(M) of the INDIA bloc had met the Election Commission on Friday and submitted a memorandum on the instances of central agencies targeting them.

Delhi CM issues 1st order from custody: AAP

ANUP VERMA @ New Delhi

THE Aam Admi Party (AAP) on Sunday said Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal issued his first order from Enforcement Directorate (ED) custody, instructing Delhi water minister Atishi Marlena to solve water and sewer problems in some areas of Delhi.

"I might be in jail, but people of Delhi shouldn't be inconvenienced," he wrote in the order as per Atishi. However, the issuing of the order has raised legal questions.

The ED has taken cognisance of Atishi's statement. The ED will probe if the directions were in line with the special Prevention of Money Laundering Act court's order issued to the ED.

Another question raised by Kejriwal's order is whether he can continue as CM now that he is in custody. Former Additional Solicitor General K C Kaushik said there is no bar on him continuing as CM for now as he has not been convicted yet.

Kangana Ranaut, Naveen Jindal in BJP's 5th list

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

AFTER a week-long discussion, the Bharatiya Janata Party on Sunday evening released its fifth list of candidates for 111 Lok Sabha seats in 17 states, including Bihar, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. The BJP retained a majority of its sitting MPs, but at the same time gave seats to newly inducted members for high-profile seats.

Kerala BJP chief K Surendran will take on Congress sitting MP Rahul Gandhi and CPI's Annie Raja in Wayanad.

Sandeshkhali's Rekha Patra, who raised her voice against suspended Trinamool muscle man Sheikh Shahjahan, will contest from Basirhat in West Bengal.

Kangana Ranaut will contest from the Mandi seat in Himachal Pradesh

Former Calcutta HC judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay, who gave several strong verdicts against the TMC government, will contest from Bengal's Tamluk constituency. He had joined the BJP recently after resigning as HC judge.

Industrialist and former Congress MP Naveen Jindal on Sunday joined BJP and was immediately named the party's candidate for Kurukshetra seat in Haryana. He had represented the seat between 2004 and 14.

As was reported first by this newspaper, Pilibhit sitting MP Varun Gandhi was dropped and Uttar Pradesh minister Jitin Prasada was fielded from the seat. Varun's mother and Sultanpur sitting MP Maneka Gandhi will contest from the same seat again.

Sita Soren, who joined recently from the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, was named for the Dumka LS seat. In Andhra Pradesh, state BJP chief D Purandareshwari was fielded from the Rajahmundry LS seat, while Varaparasad Rao, who joined the party on Sunday, was fielded from Tirupati.

Former law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad was fielded from Patna Sahib in Bihar, while Union minister RK Singh was repeated from Arrah.

Actor Arun Govil, who played Lord Rama in Ramayana, will fight from UP's Meerut.

Union ministers Ashwini Kumar Choubey, VK Singh, and ex-Union minister Anant Kumar Hegde have not been given tickets this time.

Ex-IAF chief joins BJP

Former Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria joined the BJP on Sunday just ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. He was with the IAF for 41 years. He called on party president JP Nadda at his residence.

LOK SABHA POLLS

Kageri, Shettar among 4 in BJP second state list

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE BJP on Sunday announced its second list of candidates for Lok Sabha elections in Karnataka.

Former Assembly Speaker Vishveshwara Hegde Kageri will contest from Uttara Kannada constituency instead of sitting MP Ananth Kumar Hegde. The party will field former chief minister Jagadish Shettar from Belagavi constituency. It has chosen former minister Dr Sudhakar for Chikkaballapura constituency and Raja Amareshwar Naik for Raichur.

With this, the saffron party has announced its candidates for 24 seats in the state. The party is yet to finalise its candidate for Chitradurga constituency.

The names of former minister Govind Karjol and Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment A Narayana Swamy are doing the rounds for this constituency. However, local BJP workers are against them. This is the reason for the delay in finalising a candidate for Chitradurga constituency, according to sources in the party.

IIT-Guwahati student aspiring to join Islamic State arrested

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

ONE MORE SUSPECT

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said there is one more radicalised student in the IIT, Guwahati. "Not one but there are two students. We got one and hopefully, we will get the other soon," the chief minister said

A student of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati, who had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State and had gone missing, was detained by the police on Saturday as he was reportedly on his way to join the terrorist group.

The fourth-year student, hailing from Okhla in Delhi, was nabbed by the Assam Police from Hajo, about 30 km from Guwahati.

"Reference @IITGuwahati student pledging allegiance to ISIS—the said student has been detained while travelling and further lawful follow up would take place," Director General of Police GP Singh wrote on X.

Before disappearing from the IIT campus, the student had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State through his social media posts. In an email sent to the police, he said he has plans to join the terror group.

"We immediately contacted the IIT-Guwahati authorities but they said the student was missing since noon. His mobile phone was also switched off," additional superintendent of police Kalyan Kumar Pathak who is a part of Assam Police's Special Task Force, said.

A black flag, resembling that of the Islamic State, was recovered from the student's hostel room and sent for verification. Pathak said the police were trying to find the motive behind sending the email.

The incident comes days after the Special Task Force nabbed ISIS India head Haris Farooqi and his associate soon after the duo had crossed over into Assam's Dhubri district from Bangladesh.

K'taka's claim of fund denial utterly baseless, says Nirmala

KARTHIK KK @ Mysuru

UNION Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday dismissed the state government's claim that Karnataka is not getting its due share of funds from the Centre.

Participating in an interaction programme organised here by the Thinkers' Forum, she termed the claim "utterly baseless" and clarified that the Centre has been releasing Karnataka's share of funds as and when required.

All funds payable to Karnataka have been released. But if the due process of an audited certificate has not been received by the Centre, then it cannot release funds.

Sitharaman said if the amount claimed by the state government is not part of the final recommendations of the Finance Commission, the Centre cannot release it. She stressed the need to differentiate between genuine financial allocations and misinterpretations aimed at confusing the people.

Sitharaman said that she will send a Kannada version of the Finance Commission's recommendations to the state government to clear its doubts.

She said Karnataka's economy was doing well till a few months ago. The state government is now accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of not giving money to run its welfare schemes. CONTINUED ON: P4

TITAN-IC VICTORY

Gujarat Titans skipper Shubman Gill (centre) kicked off his IPL captaincy chapter with a six-run victory against Mumbai Indians on Sunday | SPORTZPICS | P11

EXPRESS READ

SSLC exam in 2,750 centres across state from today

Bengaluru: SSLC examination will be held in 2,750 centres across the state from Monday, with 8,69,968 students, including 4,28,058 girls, appearing for it. The examination will be held from 10.15 am to 1.30 pm till April 6. Prohibitory orders will be in force around the centres. BMTC and KSRTC will provide free rides for SSLC students | P2

Include Mekedatu in manifestos, Gowda tells Karnataka parties

Bengaluru: Former PM and JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda on Sunday urged all political parties in the state to include the Mekedatu drinking water project in their poll manifestos. "Let BJP, Congress and JDS announce in their manifestos, and we all will work together for the project," he said | P5

It's a nightmare in Istanbul for 50 flyers

S LALITHA @ Bengaluru

NEARLY 50 flyers headed to India during the Easter break in London via Turkey had a harrowing experience after their IndiGo flight to Mumbai got delayed by 15 hours on March 22.

The initial six hours till 2.30am at the Istanbul International Airport were a nightmare for them with many squatting on the floor for want of seats where they were asked to wait. They were not even given food or information on the flight departure.

Their passports were taken away and returned after bitter arguments with airport officials. They reached their destinations in India from Mumbai on Saturday.

While Turkish Airlines flew most of the flyers from London to Istanbul, IndiGo was to take them from there to Mumbai after a one-hour layover there. However, the IndiGo flight (6E 0018), which was to take off at 8 pm on March 22, was rescheduled to 3.30am the following day and then to 8am. Finally, it took off at 11am.

Passengers wait for IndiGo flight at Istanbul International Airport | SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

One of the flyers, Rohit Sharma from Mangaluru and an MBA student from University of East London, told *TNIE*, "With the ticket fare for direct flight from the UK to Karnataka touching Rs 1 lakh, I opted to come via Turkey and Mumbai, which cost me only Rs 44,000. But it was a nightmarish experience at the Istanbul airport. We were taken to the travel desk at one corner of the airport where there were only five chairs. When a request was made for more chairs, the response from airport staff was rude. There was no support or information from the airline. Only after new boarding passes were issued after taking our passports, we got to know that our flight would be at 8am the next day." "I finally reached home at 12.05am on March 23 instead of the same time a day earlier," he said. CONTINUED ON: P5

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THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU

ALMANAC TODAY
Monday: 25/03/2024 • Year: Shobhakruta • Ayana: Uttharayana
Ritu: Sishira • Masa: Phalguna • Paksha: Sukla • Tithi: Purnima 11.18 am
Nakshatra: Utthara Phalguni 9.43 am • Moon in Tula Rashi • Rahukaala: 07:30 am to 09:00 am
Gulikakala: 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm • Yamaganda: 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

WEATHER
MIN 20°C | MAX 35°C
FORECAST Sunny

Sunrise 06.20 am
Sunset 06.30 pm
Moonrise 06.39 pm
Moonset 06.17 am

02 BENGALURU | MONDAY 25.03.2024 | newindianexpress.com

8,69,968 students to appear for SSLC exam

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

In all, 8,69,968 students will appear for the annual SSLC examination to be held in 2,750 centres across the state from Monday. Of them, 4,28,058 are girls.

According to a press release from the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board, 8,10,368 are regular students, 18,225 private, 41,375 repeaters and 5,424 differently-abled students. The examination will be held from 10:15am to 1:30pm till April 6.

The students can write the examination in Kannada, English, Hindi, Marathi, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, and Sanskrit languages.

All examination centres will be under CCTV surveillance to prevent malpractice. The board has banned students and staff on exam duty from taking mobile phones to the examination centres.

Prohibitory orders will be in force around the centres. Police personnel will be deployed in all centres. BMTC and KSRTC will provide free rides for SSLC students.

Principals of the district institutes of education and training (DIET) have been appointed as district superintendent officers. DIET lecturers have been appointed as vigilance officers. Other officers of the Education Department will work as positional vigilance officers.

Belagavi Airport

AIRPORTS SEE RISE IN PAX TRAFFIC, MIXED BAG FOR KARNATAKA

KIA sees 6.3% increase in overall patronage with 30,46,010 flyers

S LALITHA @ Bengaluru

IN line with the constantly improving air passenger traffic scenario in the country, airports have recorded an increase of 8.1% last month as compared to February last year with international travel from the country driving the growth.

Air Traffic Report for February 2024 released by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) reveals that when it comes to the airports in Karnataka, Bengaluru, Mangaluru and Belagavi have shown an increase in flyers while Mysuru, Kalaburagi, and Hubballi have shown a dip in ridership.

Data reveals that the country has seen a 19.3% growth in international traffic with 5.94 million passengers in February 2024 as compared to 4.98 million in the corresponding period last year. Domestic traffic has recorded a 5.8% growth with 25.44 million and 24.05 million during the respective periods.

Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) has seen a 6.3% increase in overall patronage with 30,46,010 flyers versus 28,66,773 in the period taken for comparison. Of this, the international passenger traffic has a 16.4% growth over February last year with 3,78,052 flying abroad from Bengaluru last month. Its domestic growth stands at 5% with 26,67,958 passengers flying in February 2024.

Belagavi is showing a resurgence with an 80.6% growth with 29,530 passengers taking to the skies in February this year as compared to 16,353 in February 2023. "After SpiceJet shut operations at Belagavi completely, IndiGo has launched daily operations in the Belagavi-Delhi route. It has a good patronage with 70% now. When the summer vacation period starts, it will cross 90%. This has boosted our growth this February compared to last year Also, StarAir used to operate an Embraer 145 aircraft to Mumbai from here earlier. It has now changed it to an Embraer 175 aircraft which has 80 seats and its operations are for six days a week," Airport Director S Thiyagarajan told *TNIE*.

Meanwhile, Mangaluru has recorded a 24.5% growth with 1,69,362 flyers in February this year as against 1,36,007 flyers last February. Karnataka's newest airport, Shivamogga, is slowly picking up pace with 7,282 flyers in February. It had 6,430 flyers in January this year.

Patronage down

Mysuru airport continues to have a huge dip in patronage with just 8,096 flyers recorded, a 37.3% dip over February 2023 when it had 12,918 flyers. Airport Director TR Anoop attributed the dip to Alliance Air pulling out of its Goa operations from Mysuru earlier and then from Hyderabad by mid-February. IndiGo flights to Hyderabad and Chennai are presently operational here. Airlines who were interested in running different routes under the Regional Connectivity Scheme earlier have diverted to other routes, he added.

₹2.5k cr mega rail terminal to come up at Devanahalli

S LALITHA @ Bengaluru

The Bengaluru Railway Division is planning a big terminal at Devanahalli with maintenance facilities to decongest other key railway stations in the city. It is estimated to cost around Rs 2,500 crore and the feasibility study for it is almost completed, said a railway official.

The official told TNIE, "It is being conceived under the Vikasit Bharat project. We are looking at building it on 200 acres and are working on the availability of land. It will have at least 10 platforms for running trains. Once in place, it will decongest KSR Bengaluru, Yeshwanthpur and Bengaluru Cantonment railway stations, which are all saturated now.₹₹

"We are looking at a location that would be 4 or 5 km away from the existing Devanahalli Halt station. The project needs to be approved by the Railway Board and then by the Union Cabinet because of the huge cost involved," he said.

It will fall along the 287-km circular railway project proposed for the city. "However, the construction of the terminal will not be delayed for the project to be in place and will be built independently," he added. Planning is under way to connect the terminal through bypass rail routes from other nearby railway stations.

The circular railway project announced in November last year by Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw aims to decongest the city by connecting Nidvanda, Doddaballapur, Devanahalli, Malur, Heelalige and Solur with the circle ending at Nidvanda. "When the circular project is in place, shifting of trains here would be quite easy. Feasibility study for the project is on currently."

Rajarajeshwari Nagar Lake, which was drained out for renovation, remains completely dry in Bengaluru on Sunday | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

EXPERTS CALL FOR BETTER LAKE REVIVAL MEASURES

Bengaluru: Amidst the severe water crisis gripping Bengaluru and its surrounding areas, the debate over the responsibility and methods for rejuvenating contaminated water bodies has intensified. Anand Malligavad, who has been working on reviving water bodies on the outskirts of Bengaluru, has come under scrutiny from experts and activists despite his success in rejuvenating 35 lakes since 2016 in areas such as Electronic City, Jigani, Anekal, Kammasandra and Bommasandra. He has been invited by the Uttar Pradesh government to help clean Sangam in Prayagaraj, ahead of the Kumbh Mela, scheduled to be held in 2025, using natural cleaning models. Malligavad's technique focuses on allowing untreated water to flow naturally, with 85% of the lake area replenished by rainwater post-rejuvenation, while the remaining 15% is allowed to merge with sewage water, where sewage treatments plants (STPs) and wetlands are set up. Moreover, the extracted silt and sludge are repurposed for constructing bunds and walkways in the vicinity. However, some activists, including members of Friends of Lakes, have raised concerns. They argue that Malligavad's approach has led to flooding in homes around Kammasandra and Bommasandra. Additionally, they assert that his initiatives on city outskirts lack official approval from government agencies. However, panchayat members of Anekal have expressed a more accommodating stance, stating that any efforts towards lake rejuvenation are welcome, albeit open to suggestions for improvement. Prof TV Ramachandra from Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc said that criticism should be accompanied by helpful suggestions.

BWSSB clears hyacinth blocking Cauvery channel

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) sprang into action to clear hyacinth plants that were impeding the free flow of Cauvery water into the channels, averting a potential water crisis in the city. Due to heavy winds on Friday night, hyacinth plants were swept towards the screen railing of the canals at Netkallappa Balance Reservoir, obstructing the flow of water. BWSSB said that the plants could have significantly affected water supply by reducing it by up to 1,000 MLD. However, swift action mitigated the impact, limiting the reduction to 100 MLD.

The water flow from the canal was reduced by half on Friday night. Upon learning the situation, BWSSB Chairman Ramprasat Manohar directed officials to set up a special team to get the plants removed, said a press release from the water board on Sunday.

Commencing operations on Friday at 10 pm and continuing until Saturday at 2 am, BWSSB officials, aided by workers, gathered the hyacinth, bundled and extracted them from the canal with the help of earthmover.

The water board emphasized that had the blockage not been promptly addressed, it could have resulted in a shortage of 1,000 MLD. As a consequence of the remedial efforts, a shortfall of 100 MLD in water supply is anticipated on Sunday and Monday in certain areas, while normal water supply will be maintained in other areas. To mitigate the impact of the reduced supply, the board announced plans to provide water through tankers to affected areas.

Hyacinth plants obstruct free flow of Cauvery water at Netkallappa Reservoir

EXPRESS READ

After video goes viral, BBMP clarifies no plans to hike property tax

Bengaluru: Bruhat Bengaluru Mahangara Palike (BBMP) has clarified that there will be no increase in property tax from April 1. The civic body's clarification came in response to a video shared on the Instagram account "Index.daily", where Anuragh Singh claimed that property tax in Karnataka, particularly within BBMP limits, would experience significant hikes. In the video posted on March 13, Singh asserted that property taxes for residential buildings would double, while those for commercial properties would triple or even increase by up to five times. In a press note released on Sunday, BBMP refuted these claims, stating that they are entirely false and misleading. The civic body emphasized that there will be no hike in property tax collection beginning April 1, 2024, highlighting that the tax rates revised in 2016 will continue. Since the video continues to circulate on social media platforms despite clarifications, the BBMP has written to the Bangalore City Police Commissioner, urging authorities to address the dissemination of false information and take appropriate legal action against those responsible. BBMP urged citizens not to be misled by such misinformation.

RANG BARSE

Children smear colours on each other to celebrate Holi in Bengaluru on Sunday | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

Nature enthusiasts extend support to Sonam Wangchuk's fast

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

OVER 100 nature enthusiasts gathered at Freedom Park on Sunday morning to show their solidarity with Sonam Wangchuk, an innovator and education reformist, who was observing his 19th day of fasting, sustained only by water and salt, as a means of raising awareness about the damage done to Himalayan region due to industrialisation.

The gathering, adorned with placards bearing various slogans, commenced with Ladakhi prayers sung by students from Ladakh studying in Bengaluru.

Pradeep, one of the supporters, travelled a distance of 100 kilometres to demonstrate his support for the cause. Furthermore, participants delved into the pressing matter of Ladakh's need for inclusion under the 6th schedule, along with discussions on climate change and biodiversity. Renowned activist and founder of Conscious Communities, Sandeep Anirudhan, and DT Devare, an environmentalist and trustee of Bangalore Environment Trust, shared insights with the attendees. They underscored the crucial roles of both individuals and governments in safeguarding the future of our planet.

Sandeep highlighted the resonance between advocating for the 6th Schedule and Gandhiji's vision of Swaraj outlined in Hind Swaraj, further reinforced by constitutional provisions such as the 73rd and 74th Amendments, the Forest Rights Act, and the 6th Schedule.

Protesters hold placards bearing various slogans at Freedom Park in Bengaluru

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

25TH March : Mercury, the planet of cool, calculating logic, is within a deep, intense, emotional zone. This is bound to have an impact on the world situation - but how? Well, for a start, it might be a good idea if we all made a greater effort to see each other's point of view.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
Two lively planets, Mercury and Venus, are encouraging your best personal attributes. But a dilemma is sharpened: should you or should you not bare your soul to the world? If you find the answer to this or any other questions this week, then you're a very unusual person indeed!

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
Venus, your planetary ruler is forming some easy relationships, but also some difficult ones. At the heart of this paradox lies a vital contradiction, and a complicated relationship. I think you'll have the last laugh in all personal disputes, no matter how complex they are.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
A good general never underestimates his, or her, enemy. So please do not make the mistake of imagining that other people are talking nonsense, otherwise you will, sooner or later, fall flat on your face. Besides, questions which have been running round and round in your mind are unlikely to be resolved just yet.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
I have two good forecasts today. First, you will overcome all obstacles. Second, there should be no new obstacles in any case! But there's another dimension that I need to mention, one related to that nebulous planet, Neptune. This suggests that you might not notice what's staring you in the face.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
If at all possible, delay the launch of a major venture until you are absolutely ready. This doesn't mean that you shouldn't continue with preparations. Quite the contrary: there is much to be done if you are to ensure your eventual success. Just don't box yourself in.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
I'd like to look at your long-term cycles for a moment and point out that within nine months you will be free from much that you currently find so restricting or aggravating. Needless to say, patience is required. And then there's the little matter of the fact that people you live with seem to be stuck in the past. Don't worry: it will pass.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
It's not your professional skills which shine today, but personal gifts. You do have the perfect opportunity to grasp the reins at work, but it's partly due to your underrated considerate and compassionate qualities. Why not let other people know that you really do care?

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
After so much irritation and mischief-making by partners and family members, you probably expect less from other people than you ought to. It may be another few days at least before you can say your piece and redress the balance. There's no hurry, so don't rush it unduly.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
It now seems that you are anxious to change your lifestyle, though I should think that any adjustments will be relatively minor. It's almost just a question of shifting the furniture and replacing a few heirlooms. It's amazing how a sufficient number of small improvements add up to a major transformation.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
You have become aware that you cannot always be the giver. Sometimes you must be the one who takes. Yet today you may have to grin and bear it as other people once again seem to have the advantage. Wait until tomorrow! And ignore those people who tell you that 'tomorrow never comes'!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
It's a busy day in a rather trivial, routine sense, and quite an emotional one as well, but that's not what's really significant. Far more important is the necessity to realise that whether you stand or fall is now entirely due to you. That knowledge should give you the incentive you need to pull through.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
Cruise along in the realisation that you really are rather smart. It's not often that other people take much notice of your ideas, perhaps because you're so far ahead of the times. But for the next few weeks they'll be listening, so make the most of it!

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle ⬇

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		7			4	1	3	
	5							
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		5			7	2		
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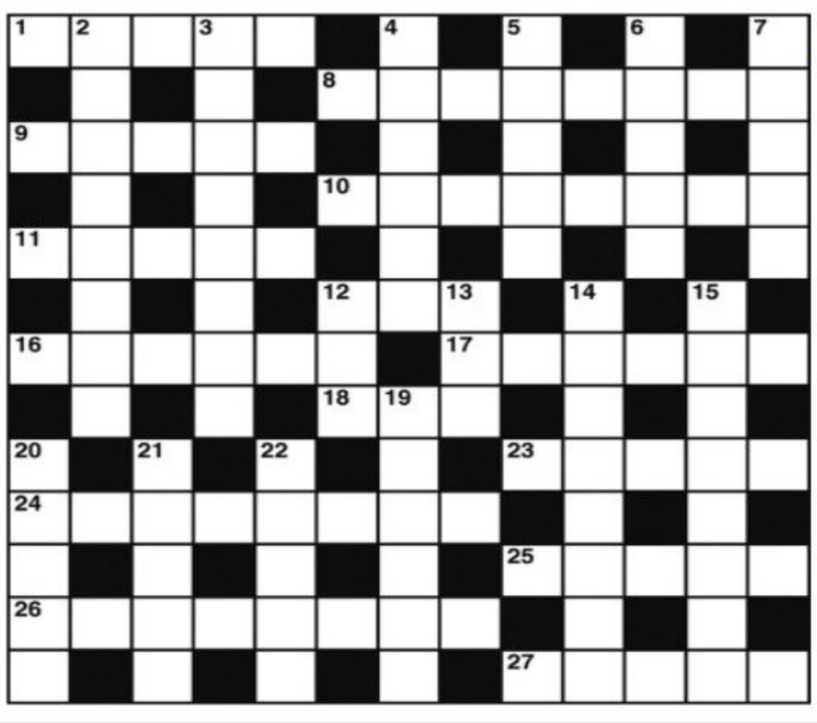
	3	4	5			7		
		6	7			8	1	

3	9	2	1	8	7	5	4	6
5	8	4	9	6	2	1	3	7
1	6	7	3	5	4	8	2	9
9	4	1	5	3	8	6	7	2
8	2	3	6	7	1	9	5	4
6	7	5	2	4	9	3	1	8
7	5	6	8	2	3	4	9	1
4	1	8	7	9	5	2	6	3
2	3	9	4	1	6	7	8	5

SUDOKU HARD

TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



CROSS WORD

ACROSS
1 Spectacle in which a bull appears? (5)
8 Become less stupid in his form (8)
9 A flat brew is lethal (5)
10 Girl's given approval as flying controller (8)
11 It's a bit rough though some rate it fine (5)
12 Amphibian decapitated - not right (3)
16 Silent about silver and nitrogen in the bottle (6)
17 A way of approach that isn't welcomed? (6)
18 Handle sheep we hear (3)
23 Declare the taste unusual (5)
24 Enduring advice on how to get old? (8)
25 Dishonest, and reluctant about publicity (5)
26 Unusually sad clue to a number leads nowhere (3-2-3)
27 Support the resistance (5)

DOWN
2 Sat in awe, troubled and agitated (2,1,5)
3 An outstanding part of the country (8)
4 Provide unending information? (3,3)
5 Placing of the winner may create rifts (5)
6 Fairy that is found at foot of page nine (5)
7 Disturb for a moment (5)
12 A bird grounded in the mud (3)
13 A worn link (3)
14 A note of whimsy? (8)
15 A diet now fashionable is served (6,2)
19 Used an odd dessert dish (6)
20 Sort of house an igloo is? (5)
21 A lump in one's throat (5)
22 Tall story swallowed by an outsider (5)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Point taken, 6 Snap, 10 Salon, 11 Insurgent, 12 Desolate, 13 Green, 15 By-paths, 17 Tangier, 19 Torment, 21 Palette, 22 Irish, 24 Outsmart, 27 Esperanto, 28 Spoor, 29 Sets, 30 Self-esteem.

Down: 1 Post, 2 Ill temper, 3 Tango, 4 Animals, 5 Easiest, 7 Niece, 8 Put in order, 9 Original, 14 Abstainers, 16 Tee shirt, 18 Interpose, 20 Trounce, 21 Puts off, 23 Input, 25 Moses, 26 Drum.

JUMBLE

UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.

BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

LECRI

ALTOG

TFNATE

SUAENA

I don't make up stuff that I teach.
Alaska- 665, 384 square miles
Alaska is 425 times larger than Rhode Island
Is that true? They can all fit in there?
SAYING ALASKA IS LARGER THAN TEXAS, CALIFORNIA AND MONTANA COMBINED IS ---
Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

"_____-_____" _____ _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: KHAKI BEGAN SCRIPT ROOKIE
Answer: After losing the first game, the bowling team was now — STRIKING BACK

A 25-year-old cow elephant was found dead at BRT Tiger Reserve on Saturday. The staff found the carcass of the elephant near Kenkere at Balebare beat in BRT Hills coming under Yelandur Wildlife Range. The foresters suspect that the elephant had a natural death

Man frames bro for drug peddling

Accused falsely tipped off CCB police through an informant; eight men arrested

RISHITA KHANNA @Bengaluru

ENRAGED by his brother's success in business and fuelled by a personal dispute, a man conspired with his other siblings to falsely tipoff the Central Crime Branch (CCB) police through a police informant about his brother's involvement in drug trafficking.

The police said that on February 2, based on this information, CCB police inspected the car of the victim, Chogaram, and found 400 gm of ganja.

After the case was transferred to the RR Nagar police, an FIR was filed under the NDPS Act, and Chogaram was arrested. When nothing could be ascertained during questioning, the police initiated a probe again, and through CCTV footage they found that Arun and Ravi had placed the drugs inside his car.

During the interrogation, Arun disclosed that he had acted upon the instructions of Punaram, Chogaram's brother. When police took Punaram into custody, he confessed that he instructed his accomplices, Sohail and Asif, who operate a human rights NGO in Kumaraswamy Layout, to tipoff the CCB police through a police informant based in KR Puram, who was not aware of the incident.

During the probe, the police found out that the drugs were arranged by none other than Chogaram's elder brother Dongaram. He had also arranged for a ticket for Punaram to flee to Rajasthan after hatching the plot.

A senior police officer told TNIE, "Dongaram, who was arrested from Rajasthan, told us that Chogaram had earlier leaked information to the media and police that Dongaram was involved in the plastic business, despite a government ban. Because of this, Dongaram, his younger brother Jagdish and friend Manjunath Babu devised the plan along with Punaram."

Punaram had also kidnapped the latter's son last year trying to extort money, but was arrested shortly after. The police said Dongaram transported the 400 gm of ganja from Rajasthan in buses. Eight men, including Dongaram, Punaram, and Jagdish, all businessmen and residents of Rajasthan along with Sohail, Asif, Arun, Ravi, and Manjunath Babu have been arrested by the RR Nagar police.

BLOOD INFUSION MISHAP

Experts call for advanced maternity facilities

RISHITA KHANNA @Bengaluru

EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

AFTER a woman, who delivered twins, tragically lost her life after being infused with the wrong blood group in Vijayapura district, health experts stressed the need for a comprehensive maternity facility involving multidisciplinary experts, specialized labour gynaecologists, and linked blood banks. Further, they advocated for a high-dependency unit equipped to promptly manage complications like excessive blood loss and other critical symptoms.

The incident was reported in Dadamatti village near Babaleshwar, where Sharada Dodamani was admitted for delivery at a district hospital allegedly resulting in her death to a blood transfusion.

Dr Ramesh GH, Head of Emergency and Intensive Care Unit (ICU), Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI) said, "The hospital staff, including doctors and nurses, must adhere to the standard protocol of checking blood and blood products before transfusion, which includes verifying the blood group, Rh factor, date, and temperature. Furthermore, maintaining the temperature and ensuring prompt transfusion after thawing the blood are essential aspects to prioritize."

Highlighting the loopholes, Dr Ramesh noted that many hospitals lack well-equipped Intensive Care Unit (ICU), ventilators, and necessary supportive adjuncts, along with trained intensivists who can effectively manage such units.

Dr Ramesh suggested that maternity centres should incorporate a blood bank. Additionally, regular training sessions should be mandated for both the blood bank officer and staff.

Dr N Sapna Lulla, Lead Consultant, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Aster CMI Hospital said, "It is crucial to have a labour gynaecologist or a specialist present during a blood transfusion, as symptoms can vary from minimal to severe during the procedure."

In instances of blood transfusion reactions due to mismatched blood groups, the immediate response should be to halt the transfusion and secure the intravenous (IV) line, Dr Sapna highlighted the importance of understanding that excessive bleeding can occur not only during Cesarean births but also during normal vaginal deliveries. Hence, it is crucial to opt for a delivery method and centre that prioritize the safe birth and post-delivery health of the mother, she emphasized.

IMA asks govt to improve living standards

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

TUBERCULOSIS is a poor man's disease and the best way to control it is to improve the standard of living of people, their health, hygiene and nutritional conditions, said doctors of the Indian Medical Association (IMA).

With the World TB Day being observed on Sunday, the IMA has submitted a representation to the Planning Commission and the Union government to chalk out plans to improve the standard of living of people in India so that the spread of TB can be controlled.

IMA President Dr R V Asokan told The New Indian Express that there was a need to reduce TB to a critical level where the living standards are not the main factor for the spread of the disease. It cannot be eradicated yet, but it is the elimination and reduction that is crucial.

He pointed out that the central and state governments had started initiatives to control the spread, but when Covid-19 hit, the programmes stopped. "It is a complete package that needs to be addressed, especially housing, overcrowding and nutrition. TB is an illness of poverty and cannot be medically eradicated alone, but can be treated. TB is curable, but nowadays the cases of drug resistance is becoming a matter of growing concern. Thus doctors from across the country have been called for an interaction at IMA to explain the importance of the measures that need to be taken and how the spread of the disease needs to be controlled," he added.

Dr Asokan said there is a need for coordination among all stakeholders and proper governance. Even if there is a political will, more efforts are needed on the ground.

EXPRESS READ

Decomposed body found in seized bus

Belagavi: A body of an unknown person was found in the backyard of Belagavi North Traffic police station in Camp Area in Belagavi on Sunday. The body that was found in the back seat of a seized bus parked behind the police station had started decomposing. Police suspect that the body is of a person aged between 40 and 45 years and he might have died at least 15 days ago. Police personnel from Camp station have collected the evidence and sent the body to Belagavi Institute of Medical Sciences (BIMS) hospital for autopsy. **ENS**

Indian gaur shot dead in Nagarahole Tiger Reserve

Mysuru: Around 12-year-old Indian Gaur was killed by miscreants at Anechowkuru wildlife range buffer zone coming under the Nagarahole Tiger Reserve in the wee hours of Sunday. The forest staff were patrolling at Channangi in Devamachhi Reserve Forest in Siddapura near Paradakatte Anti-poaching Camp (APC) near Mysuru-Kodagu Chain Gate when they heard gunshots. Immediately, the staff rushed towards the area where they heard the sound and found Indian Gaur dead. The miscreants had escaped from the place. DCF Harsha Kumar Chikkanaragunda and other officers rushed to the spot and registered a case under various sections of the Wildlife Protection Act 1971. **ENS**

CELEBRATING A TRIUMPH

A woman and her child observe Palm Sunday at St Andrew's Church on Cubbon Road in Bengaluru | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

Police stations have become business centres, says Lokayukta spl court

YATHIRAJU @Bengaluru

OBSERVING that the pathetic situation in police stations made the common man lose faith in the system, the Special Court for Lokayukta Cases recently declined to grant bail to KR Puram police inspector Vajramuni K, who was arrested by the Lokayukta police while allegedly receiving Rs 50,000 as bribe not to arrest a couple in a case till they get anticipatory bail.

Agreeing with the apprehension of the prosecution that the witnesses in the case may face threats and the investigation may be hampered if bail is granted to the accused, Judge KM Radhakrishna rejected the bail application of Vajramuni.

The judge observed that the custodial interrogation of the inspector is necessary till the statements of the witnesses are recorded and to ensure that the investigation proceeded in the right direction.

Police should be humble, honest, service-oriented, and protect innocent people. But unfortunately, police stations have become business centres because of corruption. If this is not stopped, it will definitely become a challenge and send the wrong message to society where the voiceless, helpless and poor are likely to become the victims of police officers, the judge noted.

The court, however, granted conditional bail to the sub-inspector of KR Puram police station, Ramya N, who was also arrested in the bribery case, as she is pregnant and has some health issues.

On March 12, Ramya secured the accused couple for questioning. When their advocate visited the station, Ramya sought Rs 5 lakh bribe not to arrest them till they get anticipatory bail. However, she agreed for Rs 2 lakh, of which her share was Rs 50,000. The rest was to be given to Vajramuni. She took two blank cheques from the couple. However, Vajramuni made a WhatsApp call later and sought Rs 3 lakh from the advocate, who recorded the conversation.

On March 14, Vajramuni and Ramya were trapped and arrested by the Lokayukta police.

All's not well in state of Rome: Court on EE-contractor nexus

YATHIRAJU @ Bengaluru

ALLOWING a contractor to use the office of the Executive Engineer (EE) of the BBMP day in and day out, the EE using the contractor's car though he is provided a government vehicle, and the contractor throwing money out of the window when Lokayukta police raids the EE's office, only fortifies the stand that somewhere both of them might have gone wrong and everything is not fine in the State of Rome, said the Special Court for Lokayukta cases in the city.

Judge S V Srikanth made the observation while refusing to discharge S Srinivas Reddy, former EE of Byatarayanapura division of BBMP, and civil contractor Murali Mohan, from the case. It was alleged that Reddy, who was EE of Byatarayanapura division, was found taking bribes from contractors for awarding tenders, issuing work orders and sending files to the BBMP HO for bill payments. He allegedly received bribes through Murali Mohan, who acted as a middleman. Reddy, allegedly made his office a collection centre. A complaint was lodged with Lokayukta police. Registering a case under the Prevention of Corruption Act, Lokayukta police raided Reddy's office on May 7, 2015.

Seeing the Lokayukta sleuths, Murali, who was with Reddy, threw Rs 20,000 which was in his possession through the window, which was seized by police. When Murali was asked to disclose his identity and why he threw the money, he failed to give a satisfactory explanation. Reddy was in possession of Rs 7,000 for which no cash declaration was made in the register. In the discharge applications, Reddy stated that the files were not given to Murali and he kept money to meet his medical expenses as he had a cardiac ailment, whereas Murali claimed that he had kept Rs 20,000 to pay wages to labourers and there is no material to proceed against them.

While prosecution objected to allowing the petition, the court said though Murali carried Rs 22,800, he very cleverly threw Rs 20,000 out of the window and kept Rs 2,800, but his explanation was different. On the contrary, Lokayukta police found original files of BBMP tender works in Murali's car used by Reddy. At this juncture, the court cannot conclude that the accused were without any blemish or that there was no misconduct or illegal gratification either demanded or accepted. The court also said if the discharge applications were allowed, the tasks undertaken by the prosecution in unearthing illegal activities in the EE's office may be nipped in the bud.

The Grain Merchants' Co-Operative Bank Limited
H.O, No.2, Pampamahakavi Road, Chamarajpet, Bengaluru - 560 018.
Phone 26677552, 26679041

PUBLIC AUCTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

The Borrower **Sri V.R.Ramesh Babu, S/o Sri V.Venkatesh, No.J 289/1, 1st Main, 4th Cross, J.C.Nagar Main, Mahalakshmipura, Bengaluru-560 086. Surety: Smt. Fowzia Begum M.** The debt due to Bank as on **21.03.2024** of **Rs.44,64,902/-** + Interest & miscellaneous expenses. Auction sale under the securitization and reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforce of Security Interest Act 2002 Section 13(4) of the Immovable properties mortgaged to The Grain Merchants' Co-Operative Bank Ltd., is brought to Sale under **"AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" "AS IS WHAT IS CONDITION"on 29.04.2024, Monday at 11.00 am.** Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower/(s) and Guarantor/(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, **Symbolic possession** of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Western portion of the property bearing New No.69/1, old No-19, earlier No.69, situated at 15th Cross Road, Muthyalanagar, Yehswanthpur Hobli, BBMP Limit, Ward No.2, Jalahalli,PID No.2-63-69/1, Bangalore. Measuring East to West: 18 ft., and North to South:34.25 ft., totally measuring 616.5 sq.ft., and bounded as East by: Remaining portion of the Site No.19, Municipal No.69, West by: Road, North by; Site No.20 & South by: Road.

Reserve Price of the property Rs.67,19,000/- (10% of Reserve Price is Rs.6,71,900/-)

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

(1) The public auction will be conducted in the premises of The Grain Merchants' Co-Operative Bank Ltd., Head Office No.2, Pampamahakavi Road, Chamarajpet, Bangalore-560018.
(2) For participation in the auction the intending bidders have to deposit an amount equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price being cautioned deposit by means of Demand Draft/Pay Order drawn in favour of M/s.The Grain Merchant's Co.Operative Bank Ltd., The cautioned deposit shall be forfeited by the bank without any prior notice, if the successful bidder fails to adhere to the terms of sale, time and commits default in any manner.
(3) The Property "SHALL NOT" be sold below the reserve price
(4) In case the bidder is not successful the EMD amount shall be refund without interest.
(5) The successful bidder should deposit 25% of the sale price (inclusive of EMD) immediately after the auction sale, on the same day, in Cash or Demand Draft and the balance of the Sale price within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale. In case of default by the successful bidder, all the amounts deposited till then shall be forfeited without notice and the property shall be put for re-auction.
(6) The successful bidder shall bear the statutory dues/taxes/charges/property tax/electricity charges/water charges/conveyance charges such as stamp duty, registration fee etc. that is required to be paid in order to get the property conveyed in his favour, as per the applicable laws.
(7) The authorized officer has absolute right to accept or reject any or all if the tender or/bid/ offer and/or adjourn/postpone/ cancel the auction sale without assigning any reason, and also to modify an or all terms and conditions of the sale without prior notice.
(8) The sale is subject to confirmation by the Bank.
(9) The property can be inspected by the intending bidder between 10.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. at his/her expenses at the address mentioned in the schedule.
(10) The property is put for sale on **"AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" AND "AS IS WHAT IS CONDITION"** the intending bidder shall satisfy himself about the title,ownership,statutory approvals, encumbrances etc. of the property.

Sd/-
Authorised Officer,
The Grain Merchants' Co Operative Bank Ltd.,

Place: Bangalore
Date: 21.03.2024

XPRESS FOCUS

PRESTIGIOUS 'A' GRADE ACCREDITATION

KISS University Granted 'A' Grade Accreditation by NAAC in First Cycle

A Grade by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)

The KISS Deemed-to-be-University has been awarded the prestigious 'A' grade accreditation by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in its first cycle of accreditation. The university is the first institution in the country to achieve this feat in its first attempt at accreditation by NAAC.

The recognition by NAAC as an 'A' grade institution is a testament to the quality of education and the dedication to academic excellence at KISS University.

The Ministry of Education granted deemed-to-be-university status to KISS in 2017, acknowledging its significant contributions to the field of education.

"Happy to announce KISS Deemed to be University got NAAC A grade in its first cycle since 2017 recognition of DU status. A unique feat, adding to accolades like the UNESCO Literacy Prize 2022. This marks an academic pinnacle for our fully free, residential school for tribal children", declared the Founder of KIIT and KISS Dr. Achyuta Samanta.

Educational stakeholders and the academic community have expressed their happiness and pride in achieving this milestone, giving the credit for the recognition to Dr Samanta, his dedication and perseverance.

KISS is the only university in the world that offers education to tribal students free of cost.

The accreditation underscores the university's commitment to providing quality education. The timely application and successful accreditation by NAAC as an 'A' grade institution are considered a major achievement for KISS University.

Dr Samanta extended his heartfelt thanks to the teachers, staff, students, and supporters of KISS University for their hard work and dedication, which played a crucial role in achieving this accolade. This success has sparked a wave of happiness among the students, faculty, staff, and the tribal communities associated with the university.

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Bruhat Bengaluru Mahangara Palike has clarified that there will be no increase in property tax rates from April 1. The civic body's clarification came in response to a video shared on the Instagram account "Index.daily", where Anuragh Singh claimed that property tax rates in Karnataka, particularly within BBMP limits, would experience significant hikes

2 MINISTERS LOBBY FOR TICKETS FOR THEIR KIDS, DELAY CONG LIST

Party is yet to announce candidates for four constituencies; waits for BJP-JDS list

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Bengaluru

KH Muniyappa

HC Mahadevappa

CONGRESS has delayed the announcement of its candidates for the remaining four of the 28 Lok Sabha seats in the state, as Food and Civil Supplies Minister KH Muniyappa is insisting on a ticket for his son-in-law Chikkapeddappa from the Kolar segment, while Social Welfare Minister Dr HC Mahadevappa is lobbying for a ticket for his son Sunil Bose from Chamarajanagar. The other reason for the delay is that the Grand Old Party wants to wait for the BJP-JDS list before announcing its candidates, especially for Kolar, party sources said.

An internal survey report with the party high command indicates an edge in both seats reserved for the Scheduled Caste category. "Despite not having any backing from the local MLAs, the two ministers are playing spoilsport," a Congress leader confessed.

As part of the strategy, Congress may go with either an SC Left candidate like Dr L Hanumanthaiah or an SC right candidate if JDS fields a Bhovi candidate.

On Sunday, former speaker KR Ramesh Kumar called on AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge and told him not to agree to Muniyappa's demand, as party leaders in the constituency, including all the MLAs and defeated candidates, are averse to him. Kumar suggested the name of CM Muniyappa, an SC right member and a Kolar local leader, for the seat. Kharge is likely to decide after consulting with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

For Chamarajanagar, Siddaramaiah had plans of fielding Mahadevappa and sending him to national politics, which would have left a cabinet berth vacant to offer to any of his loyalists. But Mahadevappa categorically refused to, and now, Sunil Bose's name seems to have been cleared, sources said.

Another strong aspirant, former MLA Nanjundaswamy, broke down and tried to meet Kharge, but could not. If Mahadevappa is not contesting, then it may be difficult for Congress to win the seat, a survey has indicated.

The party has finalised Sanduru MLA E Tukaram for Ballari, though former MP VS Ugrappa too was a strong contender. For Chikkaballapur seat, Raksha Ramaiah, son of former minister Seetharam, has emerged as a strong contender, though former union minister M Veerappa Moily and former state minister HN Shivashankar Reddy have lobbied hard at the high command level. "We have left it to the discretion of the high command to clear the candidates for the four seats," a senior leader said.

Siddaramaiah told reporters in Mysuru on Sunday that there is no crisis in finalising the candidates. The list for the four seats is likely to be out either on Monday or Tuesday, he added.

'GHAR WAPSI'

JANARDHANA REDDY RETURNS TO BJP AHEAD OF LS POLLS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

MLA **Gali Janardhana Reddy**, who had quit the BJP and floated Karnataka Rajya Pragathi Paksha (KRPP) ahead of last year's Assembly elections in the state, will return to the saffron party on Monday morning.

Reddy, an MLA from Gangavathi, will join the BJP at the party office in Bengaluru's Malleswaram.

An important meeting of KRPP was held at Reddy's residence on Sunday in which prominent leaders of the party gave their nod for Reddy to rejoin the BJP. Several prominent leaders of KRPP will also join the BJP along with Reddy on Monday.

According to informed sources, the prime mover behind Reddy, a mining baron, rejoining the BJP is former chief minister and senior BJP leader BS Yediyurappa, who understands that the former minister returning to the saffron party will give the party the required boost in several constituencies of Kalyana Karnataka where KRPP managed to poll a considerable number of votes in last year's Assembly elections. Some of the candidates of KRPP managed to win 20,000- 30,000 votes in last year's polls.

BJP lodges plaint against Siddu over Rs 50-cr barb

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Karnataka BJP on Sunday filed a complaint with the Chief Electoral Officer against Chief Minister Siddaramaiahl for alleging that the saffron party is trying to lure Congress MLAs by offering Rs 50 crore each. They claimed that the CM made the accusation without any proof, just to defame the BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

Siddaramaiah had stated that the BJP was continuing its 'Operation Kamala' by offering Rs 50 crore to each Congress MLA to defect to the party. His statement is a violation of the model code of conduct, the party said in its complaint to the CEO. "It is condemnable and we demand that the CM provide proof of the allegations," it said.

MLA and former minister S Suresh Kumar along with other BJP leaders submitted the complaint. "Such irresponsible statements from the CM will likely mar the reputation of our party. He has to apologise and take his words back," they said, urging the Election Commission to take action.

The BJP also complained against Jayaprakash Hegde, Congress candidate from Udupi-Chikkamagaluru, for his statement against BJP candidate Kota Srinivas Poojary. During campaigning recently, Hegde said Kota can neither speak English nor Hindi, so, he cannot speak in Parliament. In the complaint, the party said this is also a violation of the model code of conduct.

CM Siddaramaiah shares a light moment with ministers HC Mahadevappa and K Venkatesh during a meeting in Mysuru on Sunday | UDAYASHANKAR S

Siddu draws roadmap to wrest Mysuru and Ch'nagar constituencies

K SHIVA KUMAR @ Mysuru

KEEN to wrest both the Mysuru and Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha constituencies, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has chalked out a roadmap for the elections and fixed responsibility for the legislators.

The CM, who arrived in the city along with his cabinet colleagues, held a meeting with legislators and party leaders, brainstorming on poll strategies on Sunday.

"Congress, which swept the Assembly elections, should register an empathic victory in the parliamentary polls," he said.

Observing that only Narashimaraja and Hundur constituencies had given lead to the Congress in the previous election, Siddaramaiah said Kadagu district with two Congress MLAs should ensure that the party's Mysuru candidate M Lakshman gets a one lakh vote lead. "There should be a 2-lakh lead in Chamaraja and Narashimaraja, 50,000 in Chamundeshwari and one lakh in Hunsur and Periyapatna. Though it is difficult to get a lead in KR Nagar constituency, Congress leaders should work to contain the BJP's influence," he said, adding that Congressmen should know that they have lost two elections and losing again despite having worked in the Assembly polls would send a wrong message.

"I can't reach every corner of the constituency. You people should work as my representatives across the constituencies. I want both the seats and leaders should bury their differences and put up a united show in the Chamarajanagar constituency," he said.

Reiterating that winning the polls is the only criterion, he said the trend is in favour of Congress

He advised Congress leaders not to target the scion of the erstwhile Mysuru royal family Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar. "Yaduveer is the BJP candidate and not a maharaja. Avoid making unnecessary statements against Yaduveer as BJP may make it an emotional issue to win over the electorate," he advised.

Earlier, Siddaramaiah told reporters that there is no division in Congress in finalising party candidates. He said candidates for four constituencies, including Chamarajnagar, will be announced soon.

Denying that the party is promoting family politics, he said Congress has fielded winnable candidates.

Lashing out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not fulfilling his promises, he said creating jobs, bringing back black money and others are just a bundle of lies.

Can Soumya change Cong fortunes in B'lore South?

BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

THE Bangalore South Lok Sabha constituency has been a BJP bastion since 1991 with eight straight victories. It was way back in 1989 that Congress last won the poll from here when former CM R Gundu Rao emerged victorious. Since then, it has been a virtual bloodbath for Congress with leader after leader meeting his Waterloo here. The Congress vote count has seldom risen above four lakh mark.

Jumping into the fray from Congress this time is former MLA and Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy's daughter Soumya Reddy, who is a picture of warmth and humility, as she mingles with her loyal workers, many of whom helped her win the Assembly election in Jayanagar in 2018 and almost won her the seat in 2023 too. Ramalinga Reddy said, "In fact, Soumya won in 2023 when the invalid votes were brought out and counted. The matter is before the High Court and I will not elaborate further." Asked if she will go door-to-door, he said, "It is impossible to do that as the constituency is so vast. We are strategising by holding meetings in every locality and that is the only way to reach everyone here."

Reddy pointed out that of the eight Assembly constituencies in the segment, Congress holds three - Vijaynagar, Govindrajnagar and BTM Layout. "We won the fourth too," he said, pointing to Jayanagar.

He said, "What will add to our advantage is that people in constituencies like Bommanhalli and others, will favour us for Parliament, though they might have supported BJP for the Assembly. The BJP has failed in its promises of bringing back black money, creating two crore jobs etc. Congress, meanwhile, is delivering on its guarantees and promises. Soumya and her team are also good with using social media to connect with voters and that will be an advantage."

A party source said, "When Krishna Byre Gowda contested from the seat, our party had complained that names of thousands of minority voters had been deleted. This time, if BJP plays fair, it will lose."

POLITICAL THEATRE

Former minister meets CM, to join Cong

Bengaluru: Former Ranebennur MLA R Shankar called upon Chief Minister Siddaramaiah here on Sunday, and is likely to join the Congress along with several other leaders soon. This is expected to give a shot in the arm for Congress candidate Ananda Gaddadevaramutt in the Haveri Lok Sabha constituency where former CM Basavaraj Bommai is the BJP candidate. Ranebennur Congress MLA Prakash Koliwad accompanied Shankar, also a former minister, during the meeting with the CM. Shankar hails from the dominant Kuruba community and had won election from the Karnataka Pragnyavantha Janatha Party in 2018. He had served as minister in the Congress-JDS alliance government led by H D Kumaraswamy in 2018-19. He was among the MLAs who toppled the government.

Police and an election official check a vehicle for violation of the model code of conduct at a checkpoint in Bengaluru on Sunday | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

Seizures by election staffers

Bengaluru: Personnel of the flying squad, SST and police working with the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) have seized 133 quintals of PDS rice worth Rs 3,33,000. Teams of election officials also seized goods, gold, silver and diamonds worth Rs 46,45,37,537. In Hiriyur of Chitradurga, the SST team also seized Rs 1,44,00,000 in cash. The FST team seized Rs 10,00,500 cash in Kunigal taluk in Bengaluru Rural. The excise department seized 14,688 litre of Indian-made foreign liquor worth Rs 59,00,972 at KSBCL depot in Challakere, Chitradurga taluk in Chitradurga constituency.

BJP leader: Yaduveer better than Simha

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Mysuru

BJP Lok Sabha election incharge Dr Radha Mohan Das Agarwal said scion of erstwhile Mysuru Royal family, Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar, is a better candidate than sitting MP Pratap Simha for the Mysuru Lok Sabha constituency.

Speaking to reporters at Vijaya Vittala Vidyashala on Sunday, Agarwal said, "The golden era in the development of the country is connected to Mysuru rulers. When the state was still considered backward, the Mysuru rulers established educational institutions, started education for women, strived for the upliftment of backward classes and Dalits and built dams for the welfare of the people. The BJP has great respect for the Mysuru Wadiyars. Through Yaduveer, we will initiate more development programmes in the state," he said.

Reacting to Congress' claim that it will be a Maharaja vs comman manfight in Mysuru, Agarwal said Congress leaders are speaking the truth.

"Yaduveer is a common man who is in the midst of common people. It is CM Siddaramaiah and DyCM DK Shivakumar who are the Maharajas. The Congress' Maharajas are fighting against the BJP's common man Yaduveer," he said. He said there is no dissent in the BJP and no leader is going to rebel against the party.

"If there is any leader who is dissatisfied over missing the party ticket, the state leaders will convince them to work on winning 28 seats in the state," he said.

Meanwhile, responding to BJP denial of ticket to Mandya MP Sumalatha Ambareesh, Agarwal said due to the BJP-JDS alliance in the state, the ticket was denied to Sumalatha from Mandya. "As per the demand, the JDS was allowed to contest from Mandya, Hassan and Kolar segments. BJP national president J P Nadda, PM Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah have held discussions with Sumalatha. She will be given a good position in the party in the coming days.

She will not contest as independent from Mandya but be in the BJP. The state leaders will even hold discussions with senior party leader K S Eshwarappa to work for the party in the elections. Both BJP and JDS leaders will jointly hold campaigns in the state in the coming days," he said. Agarwal said the election results will give a befitting answer to the Congress leaders who are claiming that there is no Modi wave.

Why guarantees if govt has no funds: Nirmala

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"I am not against anything that any government wants to give. But only if you have worked out the finances and if provisions are made, then it should be provided," Sitharaman said, categorically mocking the Congress government in the state.

She said, "Approximately, Rs 60,000 crore is needed to implement the guarantee schemes. If you don't have money, why did you announce the guarantees and now accuse PM Modi. It is not Modi's fault, it is your fault. If you don't have money and budgetary provisions for them or have failed to work out the finances, why did you make such promises?"

On the state government approaching the Supreme Court, accusing the Centre of denying financial assistance for drought management, she said every citizen of the country has the right to approach a court of law for justice. "But I also have a duty to submit all facts before the court," she added.

Yakshagana, kambala must-visit places for candidates

VINCENT D'SOUZA @ Mangaluru

DK Congress candidate R Padmaraj at a temple event in Puttur on Sunday

VENUES of kambala, yakshagana, nemotsava, temple jatras and other religious and cultural ceremonies have turned out to be must-visit places for candidates fighting the upcoming Lok Sabha elections as campaigning turned hectic during the weekend in Dakshina Kannada district.

Both BJP candidate Capt. Brijesh Chowta and his Congress rival R Padmaraj were on a temple visit spree as places of worship attracted huge crowds for various religious and cultural events. Though they are not allowed to openly campaign on temple premises, these places provide them an opportunity to indulge in informal campaigning as they interact with prominent persons and a large number of people gathered at the venues.

The candidates' dependence on temples was such that while Chowta's Saturday itinerary had a list of over a dozen temples in just one Assembly segment - Mulki-Moodbidre, Padmaraj could not afford to miss nemotsava at Enmuru Sri Koti Chennayya Kshetra in Puttur. By the time he reached the venue, it was 2.30 am on Sunday. On Saturday, after attending the party meeting in Bengaluru, he also managed to visit the Surya-Chandra Jodikere Kambala in Venur of Belthangady.

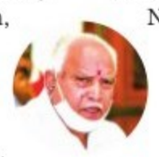
The religious and cultural ceremonies peak in the region during the summer months as people tend to get busy in agricultural activities once the monsoon sets in. Apart from offering pujas and greeting devotees with folded hands, the candidates also make it a point to meet the temple trustees, give them a patient hearing, and promise to fulfill their demands once they are elected.

Before entering places of worship or cultural events, the candidates and their party workers ensure that they do not carry shawls or flags that contain their party symbols to avoid action for poll code violation.

Sources said places of religious and cultural events provide a platform for candidates to better connect with people. "Some prominent people avoid meeting some candidates at their house due to various reasons. But they will have no problem meeting them during such events. Hence, the candidates do not miss visiting such venues," a source pointed out.

BSY, family seek goddess' blessings

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Shivamogga



BJP Parliamentary Board member and former CM B S Yediyurappa and his son, BJP state president B Y Vijayendra, along with family members performed Nava Chandika Homa at Annapoorneshwari temple at Horanadu in Chikkamagaluru district on Sunday. Yediyurappa's daughters also took part in the rituals.

In the backdrop of the Lok Sabha elections, Yediyurappa and Vijayendra, who are tasked with winning as many as seats as possible for the BJP, conducted the homa, a sacred ritual dedicated to Goddess Chandika. Devotees believe that performing the Nava Chandika Homa brings blessings, removes obstacles and fulfils wishes.

Speaking after the homa, Yediyurappa said it was performed for sufficient rain and bountiful harvest across the state. "This Lok Sabha election is to make PM Narendra Modi retain power. We are hoping to win all 28 seats in the state thanks to the blessings of the goddess as well as the people," he said.

Vijayendra said the homa was performed to pray to the goddess to give more strength to Modi. "We want to strengthen his hands by winning more seats in the state. Hence, we prayed to the goddess," he said.

Vijayendra also ridiculed the state government for approaching the Supreme Court seeking emergency funds. "The CM and the government are going through a bad time right now. In order to hide his failures, the CM has enacted a drama by approaching the apex court. This does not suit the stature of a CM," he said.

Telangana police booked 7 people including a class 10 student and a minor, for malpractice during exams at ZPHS in Kusumanchi village. Relatives of students tried to enter the exam centre to help them. Headmaster R Venkata Reddy lodged a complaint, and the police registered a case

EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

ELECTRIC TIMES AHEAD BUT INFRA, PLANNING NEEDED

Energy dept is talking to authorities to set up EV charging stations along state and national highways to encourage use of EVs

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

IT is well accepted that the way to attain 'Net Zero' emission is by reducing the use of conventional fuels and shifting to renewable sources, especially in the transport sector, as vehicular emission is the largest contributor to global warming.

While everyone is promoting the use of electric vehicles (EVs), terming it the way ahead, there are others who point to the gray area of extraction of lithium – a crucial component in batteries, manufacturing of lithium-ion batteries and disposal once they are used. Even as central and state governments are promoting EVs, experts say that awareness should be created among people and CNG or gas-based fuel too should be promoted equally.

In February 2024, the energy ministry announced that Karnataka had the highest number of EV charging stations in the country. The Bureau of Energy Efficiency, under the ministry of power, stated that the state has 5,059 charging stations, of which Bengaluru alone has 4,281, constituting 85% of the state's infrastructure. Maharashtra has 3,079 charging stations, Delhi 1,886, Kerala 958, Tamil Nadu 643, Uttar Pradesh 583 and Rajasthan 500. But in the number of EVs, Uttar Pradesh topped the list with 7.45 lakh vehicles, followed by Maharashtra at 4.15 lakh and Karnataka 3.51 lakh. In Karnataka, the number of EVs registered jumped from 9,703 in 2020 to 33,306 in 2021 and to 1.52 lakh in 2023, as per state government records.

The Karnataka government is promoting EVs aggressively, but it is struggling to improve the infrastructure for EVs. The energy department is talking to state and national highway authorities to set up EV charging stations along highways and at strategic locations to draw more people towards EVs. The government is also working on partnering with malls, hotels and restaurants in urban areas, especially Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, to set up charging stations.

"Things are moving at a slow pace. It is taking time as coordination with multiple stakeholders is needed. Awareness and demand from citizens also needs to increase. With every change in the government, priorities change. A plan has been drawn to set up EV charging stations at toll booths, along highways, at fuel stations, hotels and restaurants," said an official from the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (Bescom), working on EVs in the state.

According to the information available on the Vahaan portal of the Road Transport Ministry, as on March 20, there are 3,51,264 EVs in the state, of which 2,83,127 are e-scooters and e-bikes, and 21,245 cabs. "If the data is closely analysed, one sees a stark difference between the number of two-wheelers and four-wheelers. Though the market is growing, it is still slow for cars because of the cost factor. Also, the revision in the cost of registration and road tax is acting as a deterrent," the official said.

BIG PICTURE

A senior transport department official said the Centre is extending subsidies for EV manufacturers under the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid and) Electric Vehicles (FAME). This has helped lower the entry point for e-vehicles. The government has also created a special window of four months for EV vehicles, starting from April 1, with an aim to increase the demand and ease purchasing. Further, the state government is giving incentives to manufacturers, R&D firms and administration.

The state government announced an EV Policy in 2017 and it lapsed in 2022. The commerce and industries department has been working with all the stakeholders, including the urban development department, private players and transport department to chalk out the new policy. "It is called the Clean Mobility Policy, which is now before the finance department. After clearance, it will go to the cabinet. In the policy, along with lithium-ion batteries, the use of hydrogen too is being stressed upon. The policy covers the entire supply chain -- manufacturers, power suppliers, R&D firms, testing centres and battery disposal companies. With this, the economics of the vehicles has also been worked upon. Batteries make up around 60-70% of the cost of vehicles, making them expensive. Then there is the availability of charging stations, which is also working as a major deterrent for people in purchasing or switching over to EVs," an official from the commerce and industries department explained. The new EV policy aims to attract Rs 50,000 crore investment and create over a lakh job opportunities in the sector, he added.

The old EV policy extended considerable exemptions in registration and taxation. In the first week of March 2024, the state government amended the taxation act and passed a bill for all EVs, cars in particular. As per the new rule, a vehicle costing above Rs 25 lakh will be levied a tax of 10% of the cost of the vehicle plus 11% cess on tax of the vehicle. "It is the buyers' liability. It is a state government's decision and it should be questioned. We are just implementing it. This is one of the reasons why the sale of EV cars has seen a marginal dip. Citizens are yet to understand that despite these hikes, the overall cost incurred for transport will still be lesser than conventional fuel vehicles," said an official from the transport department.

The government is aware that the cost of the battery and, in turn, EV is a major deterrent. But people should understand that lithium-ion batteries are not made in India and all of them are imported. The cost is high as the extraction of lithium is a costly affair. The government is also exploring green hydrogen as an alternative. The battery market is dominated by China, Taiwan, Korea, Russia, Argentina, Bulgaria, Bolivia and others, the official from the energy department explained.

It is not just expanding the EV market that is a challenge for the government, but also the disposal of batteries in future. An official from the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) said lithium-ion batteries are not new in India as they are used in mobile phones. But large ones used in cars are new. Two battery recycling plants have already been set up at Chikkaballapur and Doddaballapur. Third one is coming up in Harohalli. A private firm is also setting up an R&D centre at Jigani. "The life of a lithium-ion battery is eight to ten years. No batteries have come for disposal as of now. The manufacturers and dealers of EV batteries will have to follow the same protocol used for disposal of lead acid batteries. It is also prescribed by the central pollution control board and the ministry of environment, forests and climate change. It is easier to dismantle an electric car or a two-wheeler as compared to conventional vehicles, so scrapping them will be easier," the KSPCB official said.

Anupam Kumar, founder and CEO, MiniMines, who has been working on lithium-ion, explained, "We have been producing around 15,000 metric tonnes of lithium-ion mobile battery waste since 2010. Earlier, China collected all the used batteries, removed the ore, recycled, turned them into new batteries and sold them back in India. In 2014, the government banned the export, realising that it is a big resource for the country. Since then, many firms have been working to solve the problem of extraction and use of lithium, cobalt, nickel and other materials in these used batteries. The used batteries are sent to multiple industries. Setting up a lithium-ion battery manufacturing unit is a big challenge as it requires highly specific technologies. Many firms are working on it and it will take another two years. Until then, the disposal and management of minerals extracted is being strengthened to reduce the carbon footprint. Though there is competition, it is working in the positive direction."

Chethan Maini, co-founder and Chairman of Sun Mobility, said the current market observations suggest a strong growth in two and three-wheeler sectors, indicating that the promising trends will likely to persist in the future. The next areas of growth are likely to be in the bus and car markets. Industry hints at the possibility of early signs of adoption in the trucking sector emerging in the next approximately 24 months, potentially signalling a shift in market dynamics.

Explaining battery management, Maini said many companies are working on it. At Sun Mobility, once the battery's capacity declines to about 80%, the company can repurpose it (give it a second life) without physical intervention, utilising online reprogramming. These repurposed batteries find secondary applications such as powering UPS systems or cell towers. Post its second-life usage, the batteries are designed for easy recycling. Maini added that in India, where natural resources like lithium, nickel and cobalt are scarce, recycling becomes imperative for sourcing these critical materials for battery production. Though the urgency may not be immediately apparent, by 2030, recycling is poised to emerge as a substantial industry. Prioritising recycling efforts is crucial, requiring support from both industry and policymakers to establish a robust recycling and battery manufacturing infrastructure in India.

There is also another challenge before the state government -- ensuring sufficient and increased power supply for EVs. According to energy department records, the monthly power consumption of 3,51,998 EVs is 61.25 Million Units (MU) and the annual consumption is 735.95 MU. By 2030, the department calculates that the number of EVs will increase to 16,54,237 creating a load of 1763.10 MW on the grid. Then the monthly consumption of power will be 282.74 MU and the annual power consumption for EVs alone will be 3392.86 MU. As per department officials, "From 2025, a 5% growth in two and four-wheeler EVs and 1% in heavy EV is expected annually."

EVs and their load

Type of Vehicles	Load per vehicle (kW)	Charging hours per day	Charging frequency per day	Annual consumption (MU)
2-wheeler	0.80	4	1	356.46
3-wheeler	2.00	4	2	81.84
4-wheeler (PVT)	3.30	8	1	234.80
4-wheeler (taxi)	3.30	8	1	26.09
HTVs	22.00	5	1	35.76

*as on March 21, 2024

Source: Vaahan portal

TN to denotify land inside Pulicat sanctuary

SV KRISHNA CHAITANYA @Chennai

THE Tamil Nadu government is planning to denotify a sizable area of Pulicat bird sanctuary. Patta lands in the 13 revenue villages located inside the sanctuary are likely to be excluded after completing the claim process under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Just days before the Lok Sabha elections Model Code of Conduct (MCC) came into effect, the Tiruvallur district collector had issued a draft notification initiating the claim process. People were asked to submit a written claim to compensation for the land in the prescribed form within two months.

The timing of such a move has raised concerns as it would clear major hurdles for the controversial Adani-Kattupalli port expansion, whose northern boundary will fall outside the eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) when the Pulicat bird sanctuary area is shrunk. It will exempt the project from taking clearance from the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL). Environmentalists and local fishermen have been voicing concerns against the Kattupalli port expansion because of its potential threat to Pulicat bird sanctuary and proposed acquisition of hundreds of acres of wetlands.

High-ranking officials in the State forest department told TNIE: "In 1980, the State government declared Pulicat bird sanctuary under Section 18 of Wildlife (Protection) Act. It was only an intent, not the final notification. The sanctuary's boundary was not demarcated till now. As per the Act, final notification must be issued under Section 26(A). It can be done only after the collector settles the claims of the affected persons and that process is now on."The forest official said private patta lands can't be declared as a sanctuary. Either the government should acquire those lands or be exempted. On the question of ESZ, he said after the final notification with a defined boundary, the ESZ will be calculated based on the zone of influence.

"The current default 10 km ESZ will cease to exist," he said and when this happens the environmentalists say it will directly benefit Adani.The DC issued the notification on Feb 29 and an ad was published in a Tamil daily on March 3. The collector and forest officials held a meeting on March 7 with people from all 13 villages.

"Reduction of ESZ will allow detrimental industrial projects like the Kattupalli port expansion to erode the lagoon sand bar, and wipe out the entire hydrology of Pulicat," he said.

JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda interacts with reporters at the party office in Bengaluru on Sunday. MLA GT Devegowda looks on

Include Mekedatu in manifestos, Gowda tells Karnataka parties

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

Former PM and JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda on Sunday urged all political parties in the state to include the proposed Mekedatu balancing reservoir and drinking water project in their manifestos for the LS polls.

He condemned DMK's opposition to the Mekedatu project in its manifesto. The project is essential for Karnataka to ease its drinking water shortage, especially in Bengaluru, he said.

Gowda said the project will help both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. On TN Chief Minister MK Stalin's statement opposing the Mekedatu project, he said it will in no way affect the people of that state. "After the polls, all parties in the state should fight together for the implementation of the project. We will include Mekedatu in the JDS manifesto. Let the Congress, which is in alliance with DMK, announce the same in its manifesto," he said.

Gowda said CM Siddaramaiah had announced in his budget speech that his government will implement several projects, including Mekedatu. "Let me alone not take the credit for taking up the Mekedatu issue. Let all three parties -- BJP, Congress and JDS -- announce in their manifestos, and we all will work together to implement the project," he said.

Reiterating that the project will help TN, Gowda referred to the admission of TN counsel Shekar Apade in the civil appeal to consider building a dam across the Cauvery to solve the drinking water problem in that state.

The former PM said there is no need to politicise Mekedatu as it is a people-oriented project. Nine districts in the Cauvery basin are in distress. "I am appealing to all parties to support the project. The claim that 5,000 acres of land will be submerged if the project is implemented is not true. Experts should clear all doubts in this regard," he said.

BJP-JDS ALLIANCE DOING FINE: GOWDA

Former PM Deve Gowda said the BJP-JDS alliance is doing fine and both parties have no issues with regard to sharing of seats for the elections. "Along with former CM HD Kumaraswamy and JDS state president GT Devegowda, BJP has included my name in the list of star campaigners. Kumaraswamy is back home from hospital. Dr CN Manjunath, the alliance candidate for Bengaluru Rural, will campaign extensively," he said.

Ex-SIB chief main accused in phone tap case

ENS @Hyderabad

POLICE have named former chief of the Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB) T Prabhakar Rao as accused number 1 and former officer on Special Duty (OSD) of the Task Force, Radha Kishan Rao as accused number 3 in the phone tapping case. Former SIB DSP Praneeth Rao, who was arrested earlier, is accused number 2, as per the FIR.

It is learnt that Prabhakar and Radha Kishan are absconding and are believed to be in the US. The police have searched their residences, and issued lookout notices against them. During the probe, the police discovered that Praneeth took to tapping phones as he was asked to do so by the accused officers. The two senior officers who were arrested on Saturday — Thirupathana, Additional DCP, CSW (City Armed Reserve), Hyderabad City Police, and N Bhujanga Rao, Additional SP, Bhupalpally — also said they followed Prabhakar's instructions.

According to sources, Prabhakar and Radha Kishan gave the phone numbers of high-profile politicians and businessmen to Praneeth, asking him to tap their phones.

EXPRESS READ

Erode MP allegedly attempts suicide

Erode: Erode sitting MP A Ganesamurthy was admitted at a private hospital in Coimbatore on Sunday after he allegedly consumed sulphaz tablets at home. On Sunday morning, Ganesamurthy allegedly fell ill and his family took him to a private hospital. Ganesamurthy is a senior leader of the MDMK. The party did not give him ticket in the upcoming election. It is said that he was depressed over the refusal of seat. Speaking to TNIE, Housing and Urban Development Minister S Muthusamy said, "He had been ill for a few days. We don't know if he attempted suicide."

Rain, strong winds damage M'luru houses

ENS @Mangaluru

RAIN, accompanied by gusty winds, damaged some houses in Kadaba and other parts of Dakshina Kannada on Saturday night. The roof of a house owned by Babu and Lakshmi in Kutrupady village of Kadaba taluk collapsed, but fortunately the couple escaped unhurt. Due to the impact of the roof collapse, the toilet and water tank were damaged.

Two other houses suffered minor damages due to the roof collapse. Kadaba tahsildar Prabhakar Khajure, forest and revenue department officials visited the spot. Electricity supply across the taluk was disrupted.

Lightning struck a coconut tree in Kudmaru village in the taluk and an electric pole collapsed in front of a house owned by one Sheena, damaging a water tank.

The IMD predicted very light to light rain in isolated areas in Dakshina Kannada till 8.30 am, Monday.

ELECTION ALERT!

EVMs in Tamil Nadu being checked by officials before government staff training, ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections | MARTIN LOUIS

MCC violation complaint against CPM candidate

Kochi: UDF district chairman Varghese Maman filed a complaint against CPM Pathanamthitta candidate TM Thomas Isaac, alleging that he has violated the model code of conduct (MCC). In the complaint, it was alleged that Isaac uses the staff of Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-Disc) to offer various employment opportunities to youngsters. The UDF also alleged that Isaac sought votes from members of Kudumbashree during an internal meeting.

Flight delay: Woman misses her betrothal

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

AASHNA Gadia from Pune, who just graduated and took up a job in London, said, "There was no sight of our flight in Istanbul on the display board, an airport staffer said they had no idea about it. With our passports taken for fresh boarding passes, we could go nowhere nor use the lounge. I was supposed to reach home on March 22 at 8am. But I reached home only at 3am on March 23."

A woman from Ahmedabad could not make it to her betrothal because of the flight delay. The function was postponed by her would-be in-laws. A groom returning home for his wedding was panicking. A few flyers shot videos of their desperate situation and uploaded seeking help.

Meanwhile, an IndiGo spokesperson on Sunday said, "IndiGo flight 6E 0018 operating from Istanbul to Mumbai was delayed on March 21, 2024 due to a technical fault. The aircraft operated after necessary rectifications. The flight had to be rescheduled accordingly."

EDITORIAL

"To be an artist means never to avert one's eyes" — Akira Kurosawa

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.
— Ramnath Goenka

KEJRIWAL COULD HOPE TO DO AN IMRAN IN LOK SABHA POLLS

IN what appeared to be a set piece of power play ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, Aam Aadmi Party national convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was arrested in a case of money laundering in the liquor policy scam. Some of the other set pieces were the arrests of the then Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren and BRS leader K Kavitha, besides the ongoing CBI action against the Trinamool's Mahua Moitra, the reopening of the 2G scam by the Delhi High Court, the alliance with the TDP in Andhra Pradesh, and the BJP becoming the third pole in Tamil Nadu politics, cobbling together an alliance. The central law enforcement agencies appear to be the executing arm for most of the set pieces though the timing may have come from elsewhere. The apparent aim is to create a differentiator before the public eye between the 'clean' BJP and the 'corrupt' opposition INDIA bloc to draw closer to the 370 jackpot. But, the recent data dump of electoral bonds showed major parties across the spectrum, including the BJP, the Congress and the AAP, getting questionable funds that could easily be linked to quid quo pros.

Arrests under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act give courts little wriggle room for a quick bail. Yet, Kejriwal hasn't given up his chief ministership partly since he personifies the party. It's also because he does not trust anyone else to be at the helm. When Bhagwant Mann claims Kejriwal was, is and will remain the party head or Delhi minister Atishi says he will continue to run the government from jail, chances are they are signalling their loyalty so that they are considered for promotion. Kejriwal may have to take the interim leadership call sooner than later.

The BJP rolled the dice by positioning the country's best communicators Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Delhi CM against each other. Kejriwal has already taken a Christ-like position by telling his followers not to hate the BJP. But he knows he is no longer the icon of probity in public life, his USP in politics. The Enforcement Directorate described him as the kingpin of the liquor policy scam. But if BJP fails to repeat its sweep in the LS polls in Delhi, it would be seen as Kejriwal's victory in absentia much like Imran Khan in Pakistan did from jail though the military robbed the popular mandate.

THERE SHOULD BE NO PLACE FOR RACISM IN ART

ART has no boundaries or laws. It transcends the rules and biases that typically govern a society, and has the power to bring together people, irrespective of gender, race, religion, or class. Yet, it is regrettable that artists themselves seek to create an impression that their art is not for all and attempt to build walls. An example is the despicable comments passed by Kerala-based dancer Kalamandalam Sathyabhama against a fellow dancer from the state, which set off a debate. Indirectly referring to Mohiniyattam dancer R L V Ramakrishnan without naming him, Sathyabhama said he has the "colour of a crow" and men who perform the dance form should be fair-skinned. "Even the mother who gave birth to him cannot bear his looks," she said in an interview to a YouTube channel and then stood by her comments when faced with backlash.

While Sathyabhama's views deserve thorough condemnation, the fact is they are reflective of the deep-rooted sense of casteism, classism, and racism prevalent in Kerala's cultural society that claims to be progressive but is yet to let go of the feudal mindset. Not long back, acclaimed filmmaker Adoor Gopalakrishnan had to resign as chairman of K R Narayanan National Institute of Visual Science and Arts after students alleged caste discrimination by its director. The renowned performing arts centre Kerala Kalamandalam did not have students belonging to lower castes for courses like Kathakali, chenda and maddalam, deemed to be the domain of the forward communities, till about a decade ago. A controversy erupted in 2013 when permission was denied for the performance of Gurudeva Mahatmyam, a Kathakali play depicting the life of Sree Narayana Guru, venerated by the Ezhava community, at a temple. Even today, most Kathakali performers belong to forward communities. While film actors like Vinayakan and Manikandan Achary have talked about discrimination based on caste and colour in the industry, Dalit folk singers say they face both abuse and pay disparity.

The casteist undertones in Sathyabhama's apparently racist comments cannot be ignored, given how skin colour is associated with caste and class in India, and Ramakrishnan, who has a PhD in Mohiniyattam, belongs to a Scheduled Caste. While the remarks are particularly reprehensible because they came from an artist and the base outlook they exposed is a disgrace to her art community, it's a moment of retrospection for the people of Kerala. The dancer must face the consequences and society must see this as an opportunity to set right historical wrongs.

QUICK TAKE

UNITED COLOURS OF HUMANITY

A recent paper revealed a 4,000-year-old vial discovered from present-day southeastern Iran contained a red lip-paint. A team led by archaeologist Nasir Eskandari of Tehran University and Eugenio de Carlo of Padua University claimed the deep-red Bronze-age pigment made of haematite, manganite and braunite is probably the earliest known equivalent of 'lipstick' in the world. The irony is today, religious fundamentalists in the same region decry the use of such cosmetics. This Holi, it should remind us celebration or expression with colours has always been an irrepressible urge among humans.

The booking of Hemant Soren and Arvind Kejriwal just before polls suggests something is not quite right in the state of our democracy. The timing of the actions is telling

WHAT 2 ARRESTS REVEAL ABOUT OUR DEMOCRACY

KAPIL SIBAL
Senior lawyer and member of Rajya Sabha

SOURAV ROY

THE arrest of the Chief Minister of Jharkhand, Hemant Soren, was unprecedented. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) claimed he was arrested after he had resigned.

This is not the entire truth. In fact, the ED had already decided to arrest him while he was at his residence. But the formal arrest took place within the precincts of the Raj Bhawan, where Soren had gone to hand over his resignation claiming that his party still enjoyed the confidence of the Jharkhand Legislative Assembly.

Arvind Kejriwal, however, was arrested while he was chief minister and continues to be so despite the special court remanding him to the ED's custody for six days. Every leader of the opposition has been facing the threat of arrest under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA). Often in the past, this government has used both the Central Bureau of Investighation (CBI) and the ED for either prosecuting or threatening prosecution to trigger defections in order to destabilise elected governments in opposition-ruled states.

This is the first time in the history of India that the investigating machinery and political establishment are working in tandem on such a large scale. We may have seen isolated instances prior to 2014 of a similar alignment of purpose with the CBI, but never before in such an insidious fashion.

The problem that confronts us, in the present context, is that the processes of law are so tardy that it is impossible to seek quick relief in matters of this nature. There are two fundamental reasons for this. One, the doors of the Supreme Court are not open in such cases. We are told that the Supreme Court is not the court of first instance and that the special court must be moved for bail. Two, early relief for the accused is near impossible. The journey from the special court to the Supreme Court takes a couple of months. Hemant Soren was arrested on January 31, and he is still languishing in judicial custody. So, the process itself becomes the punishment and the relief consequently, if it is granted, is of no value.

Take the case of Arvind Kejriwal. He is alleged to be the kingpin of the so-called liquor scam. Admittedly, nothing has been found in his possession during the course of the search that connects him to any money trail. In fact, there is no money trail that inculpates any of the accused. Besides, it is only after several successive statements by each of the accused that they have turned approver.

Secondly, the basis of arrest is statements made by the accused who have later turned approver. Each of the accused-turned-approvers does it for his or her own self-interest, to escape continuous incarceration.

Some of these accused, who run companies, find themselves in a situation where they are not likely to get bail till they turn approver and the allurement of becoming approver and thereafter not being prosecuted is enough for them to implicate others. The Supreme Court has, in a long list of judgements, held that the statement of an approver, being exceptionally flimsy evidence, cannot be used as the basis of any conviction unless independent evidence corroborating the statement of the approver comes to light. In this case, no such evidence is forthcoming.

The intent to prosecute is tainted, the so-called evidence is tainted and the timing of the arrest is actuated by political considerations. Then to ask the accused to move the special court deprives the accused of the right to participate in the electoral process, especially when he or she happens to be a leader of a political party, and in this case, a sitting chief minister. This would obviously impact the outcome of the election. Such a process is seriously prejudicial and perpetuates the already existing non-level playing field in favour of the government.

The other aspect that needs to be mentioned is that in a PMLA proceeding, bail can only be granted if the court comes to the conclusion that the accused is not guilty of the offence. I just wonder how such a conclusion can ever be arrived at by the court in the absence of a trial. Such ex-facie unconstitutional provisions of law have been upheld by the Supreme Court. If, in any given case, there is no evidence and the accused moves the special court, it is unlikely that he will be granted bail, applying the twin tests set out in the PMLA.

No less than the present Chief Justice of India has lamented upon the fact that the trial court, in exercising jurisdiction in the context of bail, seldom grants it. We see similar patterns of denial of bail emerging in various high courts.

The strategy of the present government seems to be clear. One, through the electoral bonds scheme, to create a non-level playing field by amassing wealth, being the party in power at the Centre. Two, just before elections are announced, start arresting leaders of political parties who are perceived to be a challenge to the BJP.

It is noteworthy that all the evidence the ED talks about against Arvind Kejriwal was available with it since August 2023. There has been no statement by any of the accused-turned-approvers after August 2023. Then why was it necessary to arrest Kejriwal in March 2024? He could well have been arrested in August 2023 itself. Curiously, he was not arrested then because if he was, by the time the elections were announced, he would have been out on bail. This pattern is followed across the country to silence the dissenting voices by exploiting the harsh provisions of laws, some of which are a hangover of the colonial era.

Our republic has been hijacked by processes that are repressive and unconstitutional. Our institutions have been stymied. Our enforcement agencies are enslaved. Our opposition is sought to be silenced, and the Supreme Court keeps its doors shut. Yet, we are the mother of democracy!

(Views are personal)
(Tweets @KapilSibal)

REMEMBERING ST FRANCIS, PATRON SAINT OF ANIMALS

RENUKA NARAYANAN

FAITHLINE

IT will be Easter on March 31, the anniversary of the resurrection of Jesus, which is the foundational event of Christian belief. After Jesus, his parents and his apostles, the Christian figure arguably best-known to educated Indians is St Francis of Assisi, the Italian mystic and poet. It was he who invented the first-known nativity scene, depicting the birth of Jesus in a manger. He first set it up at Greccio near Assisi around 1220 CE to celebrate Christmas. Most of us in India have seen such tableaux and have found them sweetly similar in spirit to the jhanki or cradle tableaux set up in homes and temples for Sri Krishna's birthday on Janmashtami. A famous prayer attributed to St Francis has admirers from other faiths for its universal message. It goes:

Lord make me an instrument of your peace/ Where there is hatred let me sow love/ Where there is injury, pardon/ Where there is doubt, faith/ Where there is despair, hope/ Where there is darkness, light/ And where there is sadness, joy.

O divine master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console/ To be understood as to understand/ To be loved as to love/ For it is in giving that we receive/ It is in pardoning that we are pardoned/ And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

He is venerated by different denominations of the church such as the Catholics, Anglicans and Lutherans. The present Pope chose to be named after St Francis, who has been declared the patron saint of ecology by the Catholic church due to his love for Nature. He regularly talked to birds and animals; even, apparently, taming a fierce wolf. His 'Canticle of Brother Sun and Sister Moon' praises God's creation.

The life of St Francis reminds us of that of Indian saints who embraced poverty in God's service. He was born Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone to an Italian father and French mother in 1181 in the small town of Assisi in the Umbria province of Italy. He died at about forty-four.

St Francis grew up as a rich and spoiled young man who lived a life full of fun and frolic. But something drastic happened one day. He was, as usual, selling silk and velvet for his father in the market when a beggar came by asking for alms. The story goes that St Francis left everything and ran after the beggar. When he caught up with him, he gave the beggar all that he had in his pockets. His friends made fun of him and his father was very angry.

St Francis signed up twice as a soldier and even spent a year in captivity, returning to the good life between expeditions. But one day, he had a supernatural vision– we don't know what–that made him give up the pursuit of pleasure. A friend asked him if he was considering getting married, to which St Francis retorted, "Yes, to a fairer bride than any of you have ever seen," meaning 'My Lady Poverty'.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

> St Francis is venerated by different denominations of the church such as the Catholics, Anglicans and Lutherans. He is known as the patron saint of ecology due to his love for Nature. He regularly talked to birds and animals; even, apparently, taming a fierce wolf

He wandered around to lonely places in the Umbrian countryside after that, seeking direction. He dreamt near a derelict old church that it was asking him to restore it. St Francis sold cloth from his father's store and gave the priest the money. But the priest refused to take it since it was not honestly obtained. St Francis angrily threw the money on the floor.

He was dragged home and locked up by his father but his mother set him free. His father then filed a case against him, demanding he give up any claims to his wealth. So, St Francis publicly renounced his claims before the Bishop of Assisi and took off his clothes. The bishop reportedly gave him a cloak to cover himself with.

St Francis wandered again in the hills behind Assisi. By and by, he wholly embraced poverty as a lifestyle, wearing a rough woollen robe. He attracted a few followers who spread his message of serving the poor as a service to God. But preaching required permission from the Pope. The Bishop of Assisi obtained an interview for St Francis and he was eventually given permission to preach his message. He set up three orders—the Franciscan order, the order of the Poor Clares for women after a young noblewoman named Clare sought to join him as a nun, and an order for the laity now called the Secular Franciscan Order.

In 1219, hoping to convert the Sultan of Egypt, St Francis went there during the Fifth Crusade, where a Crusader army had been besieging the walled city of Damietta for over a year. The Sultan, al Kamil, a nephew of the great 'Saladin' or Salahuddin, had succeeded his father as Sultan of Egypt in 1218 and was encamped upstream. Both sides agreed to a month's ceasefire. It was perhaps during this interlude that St Francis crossed over to the Muslim camp and was brought before the Sultan, staying for a few days. No Arab sources are said to mention this and nobody really knows what happened. But Franciscan friars have apparently maintained a presence in Jerusalem ever since.

St Francis returned to Italy and reorganised his rapidly growing orders, making rules for poverty and service. He died one October evening in 1226, singing Psalm 141 from the Old Testament that goes, 'I call to you, Lord, come quickly to me/ Hear me when I call to you/ May my prayer be set before you like incense/ May the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice/ Set a guard over my mouth, Lord, keep watch over the door of my lips/ Do not let my heart be drawn to what is evil so that I take part in wicked deeds…' He was declared a saint in July 1228 by his old friend, Pope Gregory the Ninth, who also built a basilica for him, ensuring St Francis's long-lasting fame in the tradition of Christ.

(Views are personal)
(shebaba09@gmail.com)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Promoting sustainability

Ref: *Weaving a circular economy of textile* (Mar 24). As a growing waste-generating industry, the transition from a linear to circular economy will promote sustainability and better usage of resources. The government has to incentivise, subsidise, and promote industries working as circular economies. At the same time, the general public has to prioritise these types of goods.
Haseena Akbar, Alappuzha

Chances remote

Ref: *Rising inequality: High time for a 'super rich' tax?* (Mar 24). The possibility of the imposition of a super-rich tax on high net worth individuals is remote as these individuals are worth their weight in gold to those in power. The super-rich can afford to pay more taxes without any strain or stress but successive governments have always preferred to milk the salaried class.
C V Aravind, Chennai

Dangerous claims

The Supreme Court's directive to summon Baba Ramdev and Patanjali's MD Acharya Balkrishna highlights a pervasive issue: the spread of false medicinal claims. Such claims must be supported by evidence. The Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954, aims to curb deceptive practices but its effectiveness is in doubt.
Vijaykumar H K, Raichur

Brilliant performance

Saturday's match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Sunrisers Hyderabad was a Russel-Rinku-Ramandeep show. These three ensured a 200-plus total, which would have been an insurmountable total for SRH. But the new team under captain Pat Cummins almost took the match away from the home team, thanks to the heroics of wicketkeeper Heinrich Klassen.
M Srikanth, Chennai

Societal shackles

Ref: *A caring hand for those living on the spectrum* (Mar 23). Autism and progressive disorders are indeed shackles for the individuals affected. Our society is still reluctant to accept them wholeheartedly.
K Vishnu, Alappuzha

Election drama

In the run up to the elections in Kerala, we have been constantly fed on the two main fronts attacking each other and throwing allegations that one or the other is the B team of the BJP and so on. The common man can gauge the drama being played out. With both being a part of the INDI alliance, it's obvious these elections have been reduced to a farce.
C M Umanath, Kozhikode

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POSTS OF THE DAY

Amit Malviya @amitmalviya
The BJP has fielded Rekha Patra from Basirhat in Bengal. She is one of the victims of Sandeshkhali, who suffered at the hands of Sheikh Shahjahan.

Manish Tewari @ManishTewari
In the 21st century, if any power holds on to the redundant idea of expansionism, they are living in a medieval mindset.

Tejashwi Yadav @yadavtejashwi
As per the orders of Bihar government of NDA, teachers have to be present even on the day of Holi.

Khachariyawas fielded in place of Sharma after several leaders point out his links to controversial online platform

Cong replaces Jaipur candidate after backlash

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

AFTER receiving huge backlash, the Congress on Sunday replaced its Jaipur candidate Sunil Sharma with former Rajasthan minister Pratap Singh Khachariyawas. The party backtracked on Sharma's candidature a day after Congress MP Shashi Tharoor and several other leaders came down heavily on the candidate, who is allegedly linked with a Right-leaning digital platform, 'Jaipur Dialogues'.

Since the party announced Sharma's name for Jaipur, several social media users flagged his association with 'Jaipur Dialogues', which is extremely critical of the Congress party.

Many pointed out that Sharma serves as a director for Jaipur Dialogues. Several Social media users were perplexed over the Congress' decision to give Sharma a ticket as the channel is known for its anti-minority views. However, Sharma has dismissed the claims saying that while he has attended some panel discussions hosted by the platform, he has no link with them.

"I was never associated with the management of Jaipur Dialogues YouTube channel. I am often invited by TV channels and YouTube platforms as a panelist to articulate the Congress perspective. In the same way, the Jaipur Dialogues invited me to speak on social issues and elaborate the Congress vision. There I strongly opposed religious bigotry," he said in a statement in Hindi, posted on X. Sharma also claimed that he parted ways with the company long ago and the allegations are being spread with vested interests.

Sunil Sharma

Pratap Singh Khachariyawas

"I have long ago severed my ties with the directorship of Jaipur Dialogue Forum (which has nothing to do with the ownership of YouTube) about which some people, due to their vested interests, are spreading rumours," he wrote on X.

As the candidature of Sharma stoked a row, Tharoor shared on X an old tweet of the candidate mocking him and Rahul Gandhi. "He must have undergone some sort of Pauline epiphany on the road to 24 Akbar! This is just one of several dozen tweets from his handle attacking me," said Tharoor.

Sharma's name was announced by the Congress in its third list of candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. After the party announced his name, Sharma said that people of Jaipur are eager to bring change in the impending elections. "Jaipur has not been able to secure its place among the top 25 clean cities in the country, which is quite painful. If Jaipur continues like this, it will not remain liveable, hence the people of Jaipur want a change. And I believe that this election will be an election of momentous change," he told the media.

> **I am often invited by TV channels and YouTube platforms as a panelist to articulate the Congress perspective. In the same way, the Jaipur Dialogues invited me to speak on social issues**
> Sunil Sharma

Alliance intact even after setbacks: Jairam

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Congress on Sunday said that the INDIA bloc is intact despite Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's somersault and TMC chief Mamata Banerjee deciding to be "Mamata Banerjee".

Speaking to media, AICC general secretary Jairam Ramesh asserted that the opposition will unitedly cross the halfway mark of 272 in the lok sabha elections and dislodge the BJP from power.

"The fact that Nitish Kumar is not part of the INDIA bloc does not mean that the INDIA bloc has collapsed," Ramesh said, asserting the opposition will certainly cross the halfway mark. "Yes, I'm sure that it will add up to 272." Asked if the INDIA bloc bubble had burst, he said, "No, no. Where has it burst?"

Asserting that all the tie-ups are intact, he said, "Our alliance with CPM and CPI is going to be finalised in West Bengal. We have an 11-party alliance in Assam besides an alliance with the Samajwadi Party."

> **Mamata Banerjee has said that she is part of the INDIA bloc. She is not seat-sharing with us, but she is very much part of the bloc**
> Jairam Ramesh, Congress leader

"Mamata Banerjee has said that she is part of the INDIA bloc. She is not seat-sharing with us, but she is very much part of the bloc," he said.

On whether Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will contest Amethi and Rae Bareli seats respectively or have they abandoned their family pocket boroughs in Uttar Pradesh, Ramesh said, "Rahul Gandhi had said that he is a loyal soldier of the Congress and if the CEC asks him to contest, he will."

POWER GAMES

SHAHID FARIDI
The writer is Resident Editor TNIE, New Delhi.
Follow him on X@Shahid_Faridi_

High Stakes

PM PULLS UP MP CM, GOA BJP CHIEF IN CEC MEET

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been taking a keen interest in the selection of BJP candidates for the current Lok Sabha elections. He has attended all the meetings of the party's Central Election Committee and discussed the strengths and weaknesses of every single candidate.

In one such recent meeting, when Madhya Pradesh chief minister Mohan Yadav suggested a candidate for the Indore Lok Sabha constituency. The Prime Minister asked Yadav as to why that particular candidate should be given the ticket.

Yadav said he was in Bhopal as Chief Minister, and the candidate he was suggesting was strong enough to look after Indore as well as Ujjain. This way, he said, the party could look after the entire Malwa region of the state. The Prime Minister responded by telling the Chief Minister that he hardly spends time in Bhopal and visits Ujjain too often. The PM asked the CM to stop worrying about Indore and focus on the responsibility he has been given. The CM tried to explain his Indore visits but he was cut short. Similarly, when the CEC started a discussion on possible candidates for the South Goa constituency, the Prime Minister asked the state leaders to find a good woman candidate for the seat. When the state party president, Sadanand Tanavade, said that there were no strong women candidates, the PM asked Tanavade, who is a member of the Rajya Sabha, to resign from the Upper House and fight the election from South Goa. Mr Modi said he would bring a woman MP to the Rajya Sabha if the party cannot find a winnable woman candidate for the Lok Sabha. The state unit is now busy looking for a woman candidate for the seat.

Mahua knocks EC door after CBI raids, says her poll campaign throttled

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

A DAY after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) conducted searches at multiple premises of TMC leader Mahua Moitra in the cash-for-query case, the former MP wrote to the Election Commission accusing the probe agency of harassing her and throttling her election campaign efforts.

"Despite knowing about my candidacy, the CBI has deliberately chosen to conduct four consecutive raids on four of my separate properties. This was done with the sole intention of hindering my campaign process and creating a negative perception about me in the run-up to poll day," Moitra wrote in the letter.

Referring to the raids as "illegal and disproportionate acts undertaken by the CBI to harass and throttle my campaign efforts," she said that there is a "need for urgent issuance of guidelines/framework" regarding the conduct of investigations by Central investigating agencies during the period of the Model Code of Conduct.

Early this week, the Lokpal directed the CBI to probe the allegations against her and submit a report in six months.

Moitra claimed that her election campaigning office and MP office were among the premises the CBI "illegally" raided.

"Hence, there is no doubt that it was unequivocally aware that their actions were targeted to throttle my election campaign efforts and to thereby illegally harass me," she said.

"Such a smear campaign perpetrated by the CBI has solely and unjustly enriched my political opponents at my cost and peril," the MP said, adding that the "timing and methodology employed by the CBI creates at the very minimum, a sufficient amount of suspicion that they are dancing to the tunes of political dicta," Moitra said.

Pak foreign minister hints at reviving trade ties with India

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

PAKISTAN'S foreign minister Ishaq Dar has spoken about examining the trade situation with India and hinted at a possible resumption of trade ties at the behest of the business community in their country.

"India is our neighbour, what they did in August 2019 (revoking Article 370) is painful and that dispute continues. However, the business community in Pakistan has been appealing that there should be resumption of trade with India as they have to send products via Dubai to India as a result of which the cost increases. We will seriously examine this issue," said Dar on Saturday in London.

Dar said that before the budget every year the business community raises this. "Last year, as finance minister I dealt with such requests before the budget," he added.

In March 2021, Pakistan's Economic Coordination Committee had said that it would permit the private sector to import 0.5 million tonnes of sugar from India and also cotton via Wagah border. But this decision had to be reversed after it received a lot of criticism.

FILE PHOTO

Former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif too has said that there was a need to improve ties with India.

It may be recalled that Pakistan downgraded its diplomatic relations with India by expelling India's Ambassador to Pakistan, Ajay Bisaria, in the wake of the revoking Article 370 in Kashmir in August 2019. India had reciprocated and since then there has been a diplomatic downgrade.

New Delhi has asserted that the constitutional measures taken by the Indian government to ensure socio-economic development and good governance in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are matters internal to India.

Both nations have their respective charge d'affaires in each other's countries.

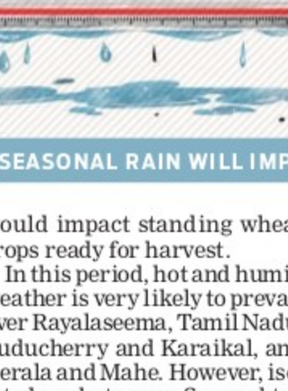
Lately, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a post on X, congratulated Shehbaz Sharif on becoming the head of Pakistan's government, prompting hopes for a diplomatic thaw.

Sharif responded days later with an equally curt post, thanking Modi for his "felicitations".

Dynasty Tales

VARUN GANDHI NOT TO CONTEST LS ELECTIONS

The BJP has decided not to give ticket to its Pilibhit MP Varun Gandhi for the Lok Sabha elections 2024. This was widely expected as the young Gandhi, who is a grandson of Indira Gandhi, has spared no opportunity in the last few years to criticise the policies and programmes of his party's Union government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Elections are scheduled to be held in Pilibhit in the first phase on April 19, 2024. The last date of filing nomination for the seat is March 27 but the BJP is yet to declare its candidate. Sources said that the party's high command has decided to drop Varun and repeat his mother Maneka Gandhi from Sultanpur. There have been speculations on Varun's next move. There are reports that he may contest either as an independent supported by the Samajwadi Party or even join the SP to contest as its candidate. Sources, however, said that Varun may not contest the current election. He is also not likely to campaign for any party or candidate. The Samajwadi Party has already announced its candidate from Pilibhit. Varun shares a good rapport with SP president Akhilesh Yadav and he may lend unofficial support to the latter's candidate.



Centre asks states to prevent hospital fires when temp soars during summer

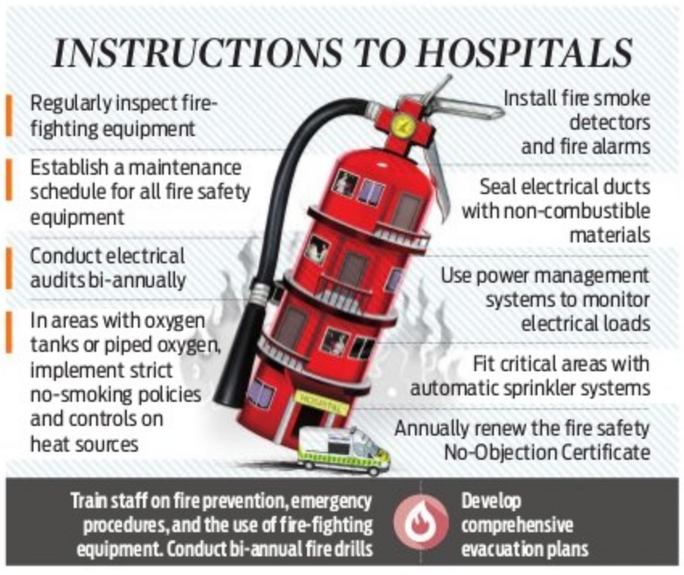
KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

UNION Ministry of Health and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Saturday directed states and Union Territories to take measures to prevent hospital fires during summers.

In a joint advisory, the ministry and NDMA asked the states to ensure all accredited hospitals conduct thorough inspections, address discrepancies in electrical load capacity and obtain valid fire No-Objection Certificates (NOCs) from respective fire departments.

In the advisory, Union health secretary Apurva Chandra and NDMA member Kamal Kishore said that as temperatures escalate during the summer months, hospital fires become a more significant threat and underscored the paramount importance of proactive measures to prevent such incidents.

Requesting the states to direct their respective health departments and state disaster management authorities to work in close collaboration to ensure that all accredited hospitals within their jurisdiction take immediate action, they listed a slew of measures that needs to be taken, including conducting comprehensive bi-annual fire safety audit/onsite inspections of all hospitals to assess fire safety compliance.


INSTRUCTIONS TO HOSPITALS
Regularly inspect fire-fighting equipment
Establish a maintenance schedule for all fire safety equipment
Conduct electrical audits bi-annually
In areas with oxygen tanks or piped oxygen, implement strict no-smoking policies and controls on heat sources
Install fire smoke detectors and fire alarms
Seal electrical ducts with non-combustible materials
Use power management systems to monitor electrical loads
Fit critical areas with automatic sprinkler systems
Annually renew the fire safety No-Objection Certificate
Train staff on fire prevention, emergency procedures, and the use of fire-fighting equipment. Conduct bi-annual fire drills
Develop comprehensive evacuation plans

"Ensure that fire-fighting systems, including fire alarms, fire smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, fire hydrants and fire lifts are present and fully functional," the advisory said.

It also said that the states should also carry out electrical load audits and see to it that the hospitals are strictly adhering to regulatory requirements and obtain valid annual fire NOCs from their fire departments.

Among the instructions given are the hospitals must regularly inspect fire-fighting equipment such as fire extinguishers, hydrants, and alarms; establish a maintenance schedule for all fire safety equipment, and ensure fire smoke detectors.

Cyclonic troughs set to bring rains for Holi

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi

HOLI may be wetter in northwest and eastern India as multiple cyclonic troughs are set to bring rains. Northwest India, including Delhi-NCR, has received pre-Holi cloudy weather and isolated events of light rain with gusty winds with speed of 30-40 km/hour under the influence of the ongoing western disturbance.

The Indian Meteorological Department has forecast that another spell of western disturbance will hit on March 26. It will cause light to moderate snowfall in higher reaches of Himalayas and scattered rain with thunderstorms in Punjab, Haryana, western UP and Rajasthan between March 26 and 29.

Experts say there has been a change in the western disturbance pattern, which mostly took place during the winter. But this time, most of these are taking place post-winter.

"The alterations in the western disturbance trend are mostly attributed to climate change. This year winter was a record dry and snowless, but the sudden frequency of western disturbance increased from late February," said Mahesh Palawat of a private weather agency Skymet Weather Services.

CLIMATE CHANGE AT WORK
As per IMD, a spell of Western Disturbance (WD) will hit on March 26
It will bring snowfall at higher reaches and rain in Punjab, Haryana, western UP and Rajasthan till March 29
Another cyclonic circulation brings rainfall across east and northeast states this week
Experts say climate change has influenced the pattern of WD which mostly happens during winter
A new analysis shows the probability of rising temps during Holi is greater in the past 5 decades
Warming probability of cities across the country has also increased
UNSEASONAL RAIN WILL IMPACT STANDING WHEAT CROPS

Rain, accompanied with snowfall, will cause a fall in maximum temperatures by 3-4°C very likely over northwest India during the next 24 hours and then rise by 3-4°C during subsequent 3-4 days.

In the meantime, a cyclonic circulation lies over northeast Assam and neighbourhood, and a trough runs from northwest Bihar to southeast Assam across north Bangladesh in lower tropospheric levels. It will bring fairly widespread rainfall in Bihar, Jharkhand and northeast states and snowfall in the sub-Himalyan region such as West Bengal and Sikkim. Such unseasonal rain would impact standing wheat crops ready for harvest.

In this period, hot and humid weather is very likely to prevail over Rayalaseema, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal, and Kerala and Mahe. However, isolated pockets over Saurashtra and Kutch will see heat wave conditions on March 26-27.

An analysis from Climate Central, an independent group of scientists and communicators, shows that during Holi, temperatures have been rising in the past five decades.

Analysing the data from 1970, the study claims that during March, the northern and western regions have the fastest warming, with the largest change occurring in J&K (2.8°C). Wwarming in April has been more uniform and Mizoram stands out with the largest change since 1970 (1.9°C).

The study shows that only Maharashtra, Bihar and Chhattisgarh would have only a 5% probability of increasing temperature above 40°C in the early 1970s. However, in the past five decades, this probability has not only increased but expanded to more states.

The analysis states that the chance of reaching 40°C expands to Rajasthan, Gujarat, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

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INDIA

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REPAIR WORK

Vehicular movement was restricted on the National Highway 10, connecting West Bengal with Sikkim, for an indefinite period from Sunday in view of repairing work on a stretch of the thoroughfare.

1 WORKER KILLED AFTER FALLING IN DRAIN IN MUMBAI

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	35	21	Mumbai	34	23
Bhopal	37	22	Panaji	18	05
Jaipur	35	22	Patna	32	16
Amritsar	33	17	Lucknow	35	21
Chennai	33	27	Port Blair	34	28
Kolkata	35	25	Imphal	29	13
Srinagar	22	05	Chandigarh	34	17

■ Fresh alignments involving saffron camp in Maharashtra may emerge soon ■ Nitish Kumar's party banks on caste survey report

BJP prods Raj to merge MNS with Shinde's Sena

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

POLITICAL circles in Maharashtra are agog over the growing speculation that top BJP leadership reportedly asked Raj Thackeray to merge his MNS with Shiv Sena and become its president as a "natural heir" of late Balasaheb Thackeray's Hindutva legacy.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde is the leader of a faction of Shiv Sena while his predecessor Uddhav Thackeray was the president of the united Shiv Sena. Sources said the Delhi meeting between top BJP leaders and Raj Thackeray went beyond discussing Lok sabha seats. Raj was reportedly called in Delhi for talks which could have a major impact on Maharashtra politics, sources added.

"It was suggested that BJP was looking at Raj Thackeray for a long-term partnership that will benefit both the sides in the state. Raj was then asked to merge his MNS with CM Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and become the president of the projected Sena, which could empower him majorly in Maharashtra," said a source.

"It was also proposed that Raj should campaign for the NDA for all 48 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra and in the state assembly, where there could be power-sharing," said source.

MNS leaders have refused to speak on record, but many of them privately say the proposal on that Raj becoming the Sena president has been received, but it is too early to comment on it. "We are happy to have broken the ice with the BJP. We expect there could be more meetings. The involvement and consent of CM Eknath Shidne are also important," said an MNS leader.

Sources said the BJP's plan has been conveyed to CM Shinde and that he has been asked him to build a consensus among his party's elected representatives and other leaders.

"Shinde is reluctant to hand the Shiv Sena baton to Raj because that could be the end of his career. However, BJP leadership is firm over its proposal and has assured Shinde that irrespective of LS poll results in Maharashtra, he will not be removed from the CM's chair. But they need Raj Thackeray to cut and divide the Marathi manoos vote bank," said a source.

DECIDE ELECTION2024

BJP will win from Inner Manipur: CM

Asserting that the BJP has 'opened the eyes of people' of the northeast, Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Sunday said the party will win the Inner Manipur Lok Sabha seat by a massive margin. He said the BJP candidate for the seat will be known by Monday. "The BJP will win by a bigmargin. Earlier speeches and qualifications mattered, but now, it is those who love the community and the land who will win," he said.

BIHAR

EBCs, OBCs figure in JDU list of nominees

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

BIHAR chief minister Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) on Sunday announced all 16 candidates for the ensuing Lok Sabha election, giving a major chunk of seats to numerically powerful OBCs and EBCs, and dropping two sitting MPs in the state.

The JD(U) list bears the stamp of Bihar's caste-based survey report as the party gave six nominations to candidates belonging to Other Backward Castes (OBCs) and five to Extremely Backward Castes (EBCs). The OBCs and EBCs together form over 63 per cent of the state population as per the survey.

JD (U)'s national vice president Vashishtha Narayan Singh released the list at the party office. Senior party leaders, including Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Jha were present.

The party dropped two MPs, Sunil Kumar Pintu and Kavita Singh, representing Sitamarhi and Siwan Lok Sabha constituencies, respectively.

There are four new faces in the list – Vijayalakshmi from Siwan, Lovely Anand from Sheohar, Bihar Legislative Council chairman Devesh Chandra Thakur from Sitamarhi and Mujahid Alam from Kishanganj.

Vijayalakshmi along with her husband Ramesh Kushwaha joined JD(U) on Saturday last. Kushwaha was president of the Bihar unit of Upendra Kushwaha's Rashtriya Lok Morcha (RLM) and joined the JD(U) recently.

The party re-nominated its former national president Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh from Munger while it fielded Lovely Anand from Sheohar.

The party gave the ticket to senior party leader Devesh Chandra Thakur from Sitamarhi by dropping Sunil Kumar Pintu.

Besides Vijay Lakshmi, the other new faces in the list are Lovely Anand from Sheohar, Bihar legislative council chairman Devesh Chandra Thakur from Sitamarhi and Mujahid Alam from Kishsanganj.

CHHATTISGARH

Liquor scam suspect gets Cong ticket

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

KAWASI Lakhma, former excise minister in the previous Bhupesh Baghel-led government and an accused in Chhattisgarh liquor scam is the Congress candidate from the Bastar Lok Sabha constituency.

His name was among the 70 others in the FIR lodged in the alleged liquor scam by the state's Anti-Corruption Bureau. The alleged liquor scam is being probed by the Enforcement Directorate.

Kwasi Lakhma, a prominent tribal face has won the Konta (Sukma, south Bastar) Assembly seat for the 6th consecutive time in 2023. He replaced Congress MP from Bastar constituency and the state president Deepak Baij, as the party's choice. His name appeared in the fourth list, released by Congress on Saturday.

The Maoist-hit Bastar seat having predominant tribal population is due for polling in the first phase on April 19. Congress has declared 7 contestants from the state. It is yet to announce candidates for the remaining four LS seats.

JHARKHAND

Women voters outnumber men in 4 tribal-dominated LS constituencies

Highest number of women voters in Khunti

Khunti has the highest number of women voters at 667,946 against 644,311 male voters. Singhbhum has 727,734 women and 705,167 men voters. There are 719,616 female voters against 707,402 male in Lohardaga. In Rajmahal, number of female voters is 841,217 against 840,995 male voters. Female voters have increased by two lakh in two seats and more than one lakh in 10 seats. In the last five years, the number of women voters has increased by more than one lakh in 12 out of 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state, the EC data shows.

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

WOMEN voters will decide the fate of the candidates in four Lok Sabha constituencies in Jharkhand, as their number is more than that of men, according to the Election Commission data. These four seats -- Rajmahal, Singhbhum, Khunti and Lohardaga -- are reserved for scheduled tribes. Singhbhum, Khunti and Lohardaga will go to polls on May 13 and Rajmahal on June 1.

Khunti has the highest number of women voters at 667,946 against 644,311 male voters. Singhbhum has 727,734 women and 705,167 men voters. There are 719,616 female voters against 707,402 male in Lohardaga. In Rajmahal, number of female voters is 841,217 against 840,995 male voters, according to the electoral roll.

Female voters have increased by two lakh in two seats and more than one lakh in 10 seats. In the last five years, the number of women voters has increased by more than one lakh in 12 out of 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state, the EC data shows.

There has been an increase of 1 29,126 women voters in Rajmahal, 102,461 in Dumka, 150,959 in Godda, 143,108 in Chatra, 200,529 in Koderma, 121,259 in Giridih, 126,530 in Dhanbad, and 154,128 in Ranchi.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, male voters were more than female voters in all the constituencies of the state. The difference between male and female voters is still 4.77 lakh in Jharkhand, whereas in 2019 the difference was over 10 lakh.

"We were working hard for the last three years to prepare the electoral roll ensuring that no household is left unattended and hence succeeded in creating awareness about the importance of voting among the women. That's why the number of women voters has exceeded that of men in some pockets in Jharkhand," said Geeta Chaubey, officer on special duty with the state poll panel.

"These are the tribal-dominated pockets where sex ratio is already better than that of non-tribal regions," she added.

'Not willing to contest Kanpur seat'

BJP MP from Kanpur Lok Sabha seat Satyadev Pachauri on Sunday expressed unwillingness in fighting the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and conveyed the same to party's national president JP Nadda. "It is a humble request to you that at present I am not willing to contest on the Kanpur seat in 2024-Lok Sabha elections," Pachauri said in a letter addressed to Nadda. Pachauri also shared the signed letter on his official handle on social media platform 'X'.

Assam Cong media cell chief resigns

Congress MLA Bharat Chandra Narah on Sunday resigned as the chairman of the party's media cell in Assam. Narah's resignation comes a day after his wife and former union minister Ranee Narah was denied a party ticket from Lakhimpur Lok Sabha constituency. The Congress nominated Uday Shankar Hazarika for the seat. "I do hereby tender my resignation from my position as chairman of the Media Department, Assam PCC, effective immediately," Narah said.

Cong, BJP locked in direct fight on J&K's 2 seats

Recently rejoined Cong

The Congress has given mandate to former MP and ex-BJP minister Lal Singh, who rejoined Congress last week, for the Udhampur LS seat while the grand old party has fielded former minister and party's J&K Working president Raman Bhalla for the Jammu seat.

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

IT would be a direct fight between Congress and BJP in two Jammu and Kashmir seats, Udhampur and Jammu Lok Sabha while it would be NC versus others in three Valley seats.

The Congress, which is part of the INDIA alliance, and BJP have named candidates for Udhampur and Jammu LS seats.

The Congress has given mandate to former MP and ex-BJP minister **Lal Singh**, who rejoined Congress last week, for the Udhampur LS seat while the grand old party has fielded former minister and party's J&K Working president Raman Bhalla for the Jammu seat.

The BJP has retained the sitting MPs from both the LS seats. Senior J&K BJP leader and Union MoS PMO Jitendra Singh would be contesting the Udhampur LS seat for the third successive term while BJP's Jugal Kishore would also be contesting Jammu LS seat for third consecutive term.

The DPAP of Ghulam Nabi Azad has fielded former MLA Ghulam Nabi Saroori from the Udhampur seat.

With NC, PDP backing Congress as part of INDIA alliance, it would be a direct contest between Congress's Lal Singh versus Jitendra Singh in Udhampur seat and Raman Bhalla versus Jugal Kishore in Jammu seat.

In 2019 parliamentary polls, Jitendra defeated Congress's Vikramaditya Singh by over 3.6 lakh votes while Jugal Kishore defeated Bhalla by over 3 lakh votes from Jammu seat.

While Jitendra and Jugal would focus their poll campaign on Article 370 abrogation and welfare schemes, the Congress would bank on anti-incumbency factor and snatching of statehood and downgrading erstwhile J&K state into the Union Territory.

For the Valley's three LS seats, the contest would be between National Conference (NC) versus others. The NC has decided to contest all three Valley seats --- Anantnag-Rajouri, Srinagar and Baramula seats.

In 2019 polls, NC had won all the three Valley seats and has been insisted that it would contest all the three seats.

UTTAR PRADESH

With focus on western UP's Muslim vote bank, BSP names 16 candidates

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

THE Bahujan Samaj Party released its first list of 16 candidates on Sunday for the Lok Sabha polls in Uttar Pradesh.

The party appears to upset the applecart of opposition bloc in the Muslim-dominated segments as seven of the 16 candidates announced for the seats of western UP going to vote in the first four phases in Uttar Pradesh, are Muslims.

Of the 16 candidates, the fate of eight will be decided in the first phase on April 19, five in the second phase on April 26, two in third phase on May 7 and one (Shahjahanpur- SC) in fourth phase on May 13.

Notably, in 2019 general elections, the BSP had won four of the 16 seats against which, the candidates were announced on Sunday. The BSP, which is going it alone in the polls, has replaced Fazlur Rehman, the sitting BSP MP from Saharanpur, with Majid Ali owing to the strong anti-incumbency against the sitting MP. Shripal Singh has been chosen to represent the party in Kairana.

In Muzaffarnagar, party's Dara Singh Prajapati will take on SP's Harendra Mallik who is a former MLA and BJP's sitting MP Sanjeev Balyan, the Minister in Modi cabinet. The party has fielded Vijendra Singh from Bijnor and Surendra Pal Singh from Nagina (SC) by shifting sitting MP Girish Chandra Jatav to Bulandshahr.

Mohammad Irfan Saifi has been fielded from Moradabad, which has around 47 per cent Muslim population.

Later on Sunday evening, the BSP released another list of nine candidates for Hathras, Mathura, Agra (SC), Fatehpur Sikri, Firozabad, Etawah (SC), Kanpur, Akbarpur (Kanpur Dehat), and Jalaun. Incidentally, unlike the first, the second list does not have even a single Muslim candidate.

Two decades after Assembly poll fight, ex-CMs eye LS return from home turfs

ANURAAG SINGH @ Bhopal

TWO former chief ministers of Madhya Pradesh, who took on each other in the assembly polls 21 years ago, are now eyeing return to the Lok Sabha from neighbouring constituencies of the state.

While five-time former MP from Vidisha, **Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, is contesting from the same seat two decades later, Congress leader **Digvijaya Singh** will take on Chouhan's loyalist and second-time BJP MP Rodmal Nagar from Rajgarh. Both the seats, which go to polls in the third phase on May 7, house the home assembly segments of the two former CMs. While Rajgarh constituency houses Raghogarh assembly seat (being won since 2013 by Singh's son Jaivardhan Singh), Vidisha houses Budhni from where Chouhan is the sixth-time MLA.

Rajgarh seat has been won seven times by members of the ex-CM's family, including Singh himself in 1984 and 1991 and by younger brother Laxman Singh five times between 1999 and 2004 (as BJP candidate in 2004)."Singh enjoys significant influence in Rajgarh, though he couldn't get his loyalist Mona Sustani elected against the sitting BJP MP in 2019," said Guna-based journalist Vikas Dixit.

"The battle this time isn't going to be easy for Rodmal Nagar, particularly as Singh has hinted that it may be his last LS election as a candidate. In 2003, when Chouhan was fielded against then CM Digvijaya from Raghogarh assembly seat and lost, not many knew Chouhan. He is now a national leader and will certainly campaign proactively to see his loyalist Rodmal to get third time lucky."

Agar-Malwa-based journalist Zafar Multani believes that given PM Narendra Modi wave the BJP is riding on, the septuagenarian ex-CM may find it hard to replicate the magic from Rajgarh as he did in 1984 and 1991. "Always remember that Singh lost the same seat to BJP's Pyarelal Khandelwal in 1989. The kind of support that the BJP enjoys across the constituency, particularly after the Ram Temple consecration, the contest isn't going to be easy for Singh," Multani said.

UTTARAKHAND

Exodus continues as 3-time BSP MLA from Haridwar joins BJP

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

AS part of its ongoing drive to woo prominent leaders of other parties, the BJP has succeeded in bringing three-time Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLA Haridas from Jhabrera assembly constituency in Haridwar parliamentary constituency into its party fold.

The BJP has managed to rope in several influential leaders. A significant number of Congress besides few Aam Aadmi Party members have recently crossed over to the BJP camp.

The BJP has fielded former Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat for the Haridwar Lok Sabha seat, replacing the incumbent MP Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank.

In order to avoid potential backlash from Nishank's supporters and to ensure a smooth campaign for Trivendra, the BJP seems hesitant to take any risks in the upcoming elections in Haridwar.

Since the inception of Uttarakhand, the BSP has maintained a solid voter base in the Haridwar and Roorkee region. The recent induction of Haridas into BJP is being seen as a strategic move to potentially sway BSP's established support towards the BJP, marking a significant development in the political landscape of the region.

"With senior leader Haridas joining the party, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has got support from all religions, castes, regions and Devbhoomi," BJP state president Mahender Bhatt said.

BSP state president Chaudhary Shishpal said, "Haridas was not in BSP, he was already expelled from the party".

On the other hand, the Congress party finalised its candidates for the constituencies of Haridwar and Nainital. The decision to award a ticket to Harish Rawat's son, Virendra, has stirred up controversy for the veteran politician.

GLOBAL WEATHER

LR: Light Rain • WI: Windy • HR: Heavy Rain • SN: Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	18	4	SNY	Los Angeles	20	11	SNY
Colombo	31	25	SNY	Melbourne	26	10	SNY
Dhaka	33	21	LR	Moscow	6	-2	SNY
Dubai	34	23	SNY	New York	11	2	SNY
Houston	25	13	TDS	Singapore	35	25	TDS
Istanbul	15	6	HR	Toronto	6	2	SNY
London	12	7	LC	Washington	13	3	SNY

Concert hall attack: Russia observes day of mourning

Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova says 107 people are still in hospitals | Kyiv accuses Moscow of falsely blaming Ukraine for the assault

MOSCOW

RUSSIA is observing a national day of mourning on Sunday after a massacre in a Moscow concert hall that killed more than 130 people, the deadliest attack in Europe to have been claimed by the Islamic State (IS) group. Russian President Vladimir Putin has vowed to punish those behind the "barbaric terrorist attack".

At least 133 people were killed when camouflaged gunmen stormed the Crocus City Hall, in Moscow's northern suburb of Krasnogorsk, and then set fire to the building on Friday evening. The Islamic State group on Saturday wrote on Telegram that the attack was "carried out by four IS fighters armed with machine guns, a pistol, knives and firebombs," as part of "the raging war" with "countries fighting Islam". A video lasting about a minute and half apparently shot by the gunmen has been posted on social media accounts typically used by IS, according to the SITE intelligence group.

The video appears to have been shot from the lobby of the concert venue and shows several individuals with blurred faces and garbled voices, firing assault rifles with inert bodies strewn about and a fire starting in the background. The attack was the deadliest in Russia for almost two decades. Russian officials expect the death toll to rise further, with more than 150 wounded. Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, said rescue workers were still pulling bodies from the burnt-out building on Saturday.

Putin, whose first public remarks came more than 18 hours after the start of the attack, declared Sunday a day of national mourning. "All the perpetrators, organisers and those who ordered this crime will be justly and inevitably punished," he promised. About 107 people were still in hospital, many in a critical condition, Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova said. *AFP*

Mourners standing in queue to lay flowers at a makeshift memorial in front of the Crocus City Hall in Krasnogorsk on Sunday as Russia observed national day of mourning after a massacre that killed more than 130 people | AFP

> **All the perpetrators, organisers and those who ordered this crime will be justly and inevitably punished**
>
> Vladimir Putin, Russian President

Russia launches another missile attack on Ukraine

Kyiv: Russia launched its third massive missile attack on Ukraine in the past four days, and the second to target the capital of Kyiv, with Poland's military saying that one of the missiles launched at western Ukraine briefly entered its airspace Sunday. The head of Kyiv's military administration, Serhiy Popko, said Russia used cruise missiles launched from Tu-95MS strategic bombers.

Kyiv says 2 Russian ships hit in Crimea strikes

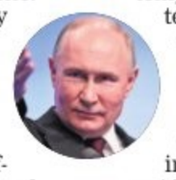
Kyiv: Ukraine on Sunday claimed to have hit two Russian military ships stationed at Crimea in overnight strikes. The Ukrainian Armed Forces successfully struck the amphibious landing ships Yamal and Azov, a communications centre, and a number of the Black Sea Fleet's infrastructure sites,

Gunmen tried to escape to Ukraine, claims Putin

MOSCOW

THE suburban Moscow music hall where gunmen opened fire on concertgoers was a blackened, smoldering ruin on Saturday as the death toll in the attack surpassed 130 and Russian authorities arrested four suspects.

President Vladimir Putin claimed they were captured while fleeing to Ukraine. Kyiv strongly denied any involvement in Friday's assault on the Crocus City Hall music venue in Krasnogorsk, and the Islamic State group's Afghanistan affiliate claimed responsibility.



Putin did not mention IS in his speech to the nation, and Kyiv accused him and other Russian politicians of falsely linking Ukraine to the assault to stoke fervor for Russia's war in Ukraine, which recently entered its third year.

US intelligence officials confirmed the claim by the IS affiliate.

Putin said Russian authorities captured the four suspects as they were trying to escape to Ukraine through a 'window' prepared for them on the Ukrainian side of the border. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy angrily rejected Moscow's accusations as an attempt by Putin and his lieutenants to shift the blame to Ukraine while treating their own people as 'expendables.'

"They are burning our cities 'and they are trying to blame Ukraine,' he said in a statement on his messaging app channel.

'They torture and rape our people ' and they blame them. They drove hundreds of thousands of their terrorists here to fight us on our Ukrainian soil, and they don't care what happens inside their own country.' *AP*

Princess Kate Middleton requests for privacy

LONDON

Britain's Prince and Princess of Wales, William and Catherine, have reiterated their request for privacy after Kate Middleton had revealed she is in the early stages of "preventative chemotherapy" after being diagnosed with an unspecified form of cancer. In a statement released by Kensington Palace on Saturday night, the royal couple said they were 'enormously touched' by the messages of support pouring in from across the UK, Commonwealth and around the world. They expressed being 'extremely moved' and grateful for the public's support and repeated the 42-year-old Princess' request to be allowed to heal in private with their three children ' Princes George, 10, and Louis, 5, and Princess Charlotte, 8.

'The Prince and Princess are both enormously touched by the kind messages from people here in the UK, across the Commonwealth and around the world in response to Her Royal Highness' message,' a Kensington Palace spokesperson said. 'They are extremely moved by the public's warmth and support and are grateful for the understanding of their request for privacy at this time,' the spokesperson said. It follows Kate's emotional video message revealing how her young family had been processing the 'huge shock' of the cancer diagnosis after a successful.

137 abducted kids in Nigeria freed after weeks in captivity

ABUJA

AT LEAST 137 of 300 Nigerian children abducted more than two weeks ago from their school in the northwestern state of Kaduna were released on Sunday, the West African nation's military said.

An earlier statement from the government suggested that all the students were freed. Motorcycle-riding gunmen invaded the Kuriga school on March 7 and marched the children into the forests before security forces could arrive, as terrified families watched helplessly. School authorities said a total of 287 students were kidnapped during the attack, at least 100 of them are aged 12 or younger.

At least 1,400 students have been kidnapped from Nigerian schools since 2014, when Boko Haram militants seized hundreds of schoolgirls from Borno state's Chibok village. In recent years, abductions have been concentrated in the country's northwestern and central regions, where dozens of armed groups often target villagers and travelers for ransom. The 137 children were rescued in Zamfara state, an enclave known for kidnappings more than 200 kilometres away from their school, Nigerian military spokesman Major General Edward Buba said in a statement. "Efforts would continue until other hostages are found and the terrorists arrested, tried, and brought to justice by Nigerian law,' Buba said.

At least 17 other schoolchildren in northern Sokoto state were also rescued two weeks after they were taken hostage, according to a statement issued Saturday by the Sokoto state government. Kaduna state Gov. Uba Sani, who first announced the rescue, did not give details about the operation.

His office could not be reached Sunday to clarify the discrepancy in the number of those freed. The Associated Press could not reach villagers in Kuriga town, where mobile network is not available. Under growing pressure to end the mass kidnappings in northern Nigeria, President Bola Tinubu promised his administration is 'deploying detailed strategies to ensure that our schools remain safe sanctuaries of learning, not lairs for wanton abduction.' Tinubu had vowed to rescue the children 'without paying a dime' as ransom.

But ransoms are commonly paid for kidnappings, often arranged by families, and it is rare for officials in Nigeria to admit to the payments. No group has claimed responsibility for the Kaduna kidnapping, which locals have blamed on bandit groups known for mass killings and kidnappings for ransom in the conflict-battered northern region, most of them former herders in conflict with settled communities.

At least two people with extensive knowledge of the security crisis in Nigeria's northwest told AP that the identity of the abductors is known. Murtala Ahmed Rufa'i, a professor of peace and conflict studies at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, and Sheikh Ahmad Gumi, a cleric who has negotiated with the bandits, said they were hiding in the region's vast and ungoverned forests. *AP*

MASS KIDNAPPINGS

- At least 1,400 students have been kidnapped from Nigerian schools since 2014, when Boko Haram militants seized hundreds of schoolgirls Chibok village
- In recent years, abductions have been concentrated in the country's northwestern and central regions

Biden and Trump win Louisiana primary

WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump won Louisiana's primary on Saturday, collecting more delegates after they already clinched their party nominations. Biden also appeared in Missouri's Democratic primary, with results not expected to be reported until next week. None of the races were in suspense. Biden and Trump have already beaten their major competitors. But the primary races are still closely watched by insiders for turnout and signs of protest voters.

For Biden, some liberals are registering their anger with Israel's war against Hamas following the militant group's October 7 attack. More than 30,000 people have been reported killed by Gaza authorities since Israel launched its offensive. A protest movement launched by Arab American communities in Michigan has spread to several other states. Trump is his party's dominant figure and has locked up a third straight Republican nomination. But he faces dissent from people worried about the immense legal jeopardy he faces or critical of his White House term, which ended shortly after the January 6 insurrection mounted by his supporters and fuelled by his false theories of election fraud. Saturday's primary was the Missouri Democratic Party's first party-run presidential contest since a new law took effect in August 2022.Louisiana's primaries, meanwhile, come almost four years after the state was the first to postpone its primaries due to the pandemic. *AP*

Joe Biden

Donald Trump

Gazans recount horror of Israeli raid on hospital

Rafah: Palestinians who fled during an ongoing Israeli raid in and around the Gaza Strip's main hospital described days of heavy fighting, mass arrests, forced marches past dead bodies and flattened buildings in interviews Sunday. The Israeli military says it has killed over 170 militants and detained some 480 suspects in the raid on Shifa Hospital that began last Monday, portraying it as a heavy blow to Hamas and other armed groups that it says had regrouped in the medical compound. But the heavy fighting has also highlighted the resilience of Palestinian armed groups in an isolated and heavily destroyed part of Gaza where troops have been forced to return after launching a similar raid back in November. Kareem Ayman Hathat, who lived with his parents and two brothers in a five-story building about 100 meters (yards) from the hospital, said they huddled in the kitchen for days while gunfire and explosions echoed outside, sometimes causing the whole building to shake. Early Saturday, Israeli troops stormed the building and forced them and dozens of other residents to leave. He says the men were forced to strip to their underwear and four were detained.

Imran's party denied nod to hold protest rally in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD

THE Pakistani authorities on Sunday rejected a request of jailed former premier Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party to hold a protest rally in Islamabad against the alleged rigging in the February 8 general elections due to security reasons. The beleaguered party had asked the capital city administration to allow it to hold a public gathering on March 23 or March 30, the first such event since the February 8 elections. Since the first option for the rally already lapsed, it was trying to get permission to hold a protest march on March 30. Islamabad Deputy Commissioner (DC) Irfan Memon turned down the request given the 'law and order' situation. He also stated that the party had already violated NOCs (no objection certificates) issued on earlier occasions.

Two days ago, Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Aamer Farooq directed the capital's DC to decide on the matter and present a report in this regard. The party through its regional president Amir Masood Mughal had this month sought permission for a public gathering either on March 23 or March 30, at Parade Ground, F9 Park or D Chowk at 10am. The party had also made requests to the Islamabad DC on March 15 and March 18 for securing a NOC, but no response was received until March 21, prompting it to move the IHC to intervene as the district administration was not responding to requests for the rally. The party has allegedly been facing hurdles to continue its political activities. *PTI*

EXPRESS READ

Senegal votes for new prez after years of crisis

DAKAR: Senegal began voting Sunday for a new president in an unpredictable race following three years of turmoil and political crisis. Around 7.3 million voters are registered in the West African nation where two favourites have emerged: the governing coalition's former prime minister Amadou Ba and anti-establishment candidate Bassirou Diomaye Faye. They were both once tax inspectors but now appear to have little in common.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client Dr. Chand Pasha S/o Late Shri Abdul Jabbar, Aadhar No.8189 7022 2617 and Smt. Asiya Bano, W/o Dr. Chand Pasha, Aadhar No. 8024 7133 9058 both are residing at No. 46, 2nd Cross, Dacosta Layout, Hutchins Road, Opp. Marianikethan School, Cook Town, Bangalore North-560084 informs the General Public that, they have lost the original documents of Sale Deed Document No. 1582 in respect of the schedule property mentioned herein below. In this regard my clients have lodged a Police Complaint on 21.03.2023 vide lost report No. 0984580/2023. If any persons who can trace / finds the same may please hand over it to the aforesaid owner/undersigned advocate within 7 days from the date of this notice.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY: All that piece and parcel of property bearing House Site No. 76/4, situated at 4th Block, Byrasandra, 30th Cross, Jayanagara, Old 35th Division, later Division No. 58, Present Ward No. 62 and Present Municipal No. 76/4-4, situated at 30th Cross, Byrasandra, Changaiah Compound, Bangalore, measuring East to West 40 feet and North to South 90 feet in all measuring 3600 square feet along with building plinth area measuring 15 squares of Ground Floor with RCC Roofed, Red Oxide Flooring, Walls are built with bricks and cement, wood used jungle wood with all civic amenities like water, electricity, sanitary etc., and bounded on the:- East by : Private Property; West by : Private Property; North by: Private Property; South by : Road:

Sd/- **MANJUNATH .V,** Advocate
LEX AVENUE, Advocates & Solicitors,
No. 42/1, 7th Cross, 5th Main Road,
Chamarajpet, Bangalore-560018.
Mobile: 8123404474 / 9141741762
Place: Bangalore Dated: 23.03.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Public are hereby informed that my client **Mr. PREMA KUMAR .D.S,** Aged about 46 years, S/o Sri. Siddappa. D.B, Residing at No.168, 5th Cross, Channakeshavanagar, Electronic City Post, Bangalore-560 100 is intend to Purchase the schedule property from its owner SMT. **SHWETHA .S,** D/o Sri. Sreeramappa, Aged about 31 years, Residing at No.145/146, Near Veerabhadra Swamy Temple, Doddanagamanala Village, Begur Hobli, Electronic City Post, Bangalore-560 100.

The general public are hereby notified that in case if any person/s asserting any legitimate right, objection/s or claim over the schedule property or any part thereof, they may forward such right/s or objection/s or claim/s along with the relevant documentary proof, to the undersigned with 7 days from hereof. All such claims/objections received after 7 days from the date of notification shall not be considered.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Residential Property bearing Site No.8, Old Khatha No.230/1, New Khatha No.564/1, BBMP Property No.230/1/564/1/1/1-8, Assessment No.1/1,Situated at PARAPPANA AGRAHARA Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, presently comes under Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike Limits, Ward No.191, Bangalore, measuring East to West 40 feet and North to South 30 feet, in all measuring 1200 Square Feet., together with all rights, appurtenance whatsoever whether underneath or above the surface and bounded on:- East by : Road, West by : Private property, North by : Site No.9, South by : Site No.7.

REVANNA M R, ADVOCATE
No.216, 1st Floor, Behind Ganesha Temple,
Bommanhalli, Bangalore-68. Ph: 9980628324

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General Public, that my client intends to purchase the below mentioned schedule property from its owner viz., Keshava Murthy C. R, S/o. Late B. Chinnappa, R/at. No. 15/1, 4th Main Road, Wilson Garden, Bangalore. It is represented that the sale deed dated 08/10/2007 registered as document no.2340/2007-08 executed in favour of Imtiaz Pasha is lost. Hence, any person/s, Banks/financial institution, having any claims, objection, interest, dispute pertaining to the schedule property shall file their objections, to the undersigned advocate, with the documentary proof substantiating his/her/their objections/claims/details of dispute/s within Seven (7) days from the date of this publication, failing which, my client will proceed to complete the said sale with the above owner as if there are no third party claims/ objections/ disputes in respect of the Schedule Property

All the piece and parcel of the house premises bearing no 15/1 PID no 62-14- 15/1, property no. 58 and 59, ward no. 62, measuring to the extent of East to West 50 Sq. Feet and North to South 25 Sq. Ft, G floor measuring 1250 Sq. Ft. first floor measuring 1250 Sq. Ft and second floor measuring 1250 Sq. Ft, a total measuring 3750 Sq. Ft, RCC Roofed mosaic flooring, situated at 4th Main Road, Lakkasandra Layout, BBMP, Bangalore-30 and bounded on; East by: Road, West by: Remaining property belongs to others, North by: 5 feet passage, South by: Munichannappa Property.

R C PATIL & ASSOCIATES
Advocate
No. 468, 13th Cross, 8th Main Road
Wilson Garden, Bangalore - 560027
Cell No. : 9448060978
Bangalore Date : 24-03-2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

I R.Mahendravarma Practicing Advocate and now I issuing public notice on behalf of my client Sri. Rahul.P S/o. Mr. Paramesh.K, aged about 24 years residing at Marenahalli Village, Bagalur Post, Jala Hobli, Bangalore-562149 and he has lost original last 2 pages of sale deed dated 10.01.2007 and bearing document No.YAN-1-25394-2006-07, Stored in C.D. NO.YAND 266 and last pages are annexures and not to main sale deed and same document pertains to Sy.No.35/1A measuring about 16 and 20 guntas at Maranayakanahalli Village, Jala Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, while he went for Xerox of same, any person finding the original above or any person having any claim on same document and in any manner should write to the undersigned with documentary proof in support of your claim **within 07 days** of issuances of this notice, failing which my client will proceed on the basis that there are no claims on same documents.

R.Mahendravarma, Advocate
No.42, R.G.Nagar, M.S.Playa,
Bangalore-560097, Mobile: 7795488467.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to the General Public that my client **SRI.MANOHAR.B.N.** Son of Late Narayanappa.B.S. has lost the original of Rectification deed dated 21.08.2006 executed by Smt. L.R. Nagaveni represented by her GPA Holder Sri.Chandrappa in favour of Sri.M.Sundar, which is registered as document No.31638/2006-07 of Book-I and stored in CD No.BLND314 in the office of Sub-Registrar, Bengaluru North Taluk pertaining to the immovable property bearing Site No.8 and 9, Khatha 25, Old Khatha No.171 formed in property Assessment No.2/1, situated at Bagalagunte Village, Yeswanthpur Hobli, Bengaluru North Taluk some months back in transit. In case the same is traced by anybody they should hand over the same to the undersigned and also in case anybody is having any claim, charge or interest over the said property, they shall lodge their objections with the undersigned within **SEVEN DAYS** from the date of Publication of this Notice.

D.S. BHAT, Advocate,
M/S BHAT ASSOCIATES,
1st Main, 5th Cross, Yeshwanthpur,
BENGALURU - 560 022.
Mob : 9916994581
BENGALURU, DATE : 23.03.2024

IN THE COURT OF THE X ADDL. CITY CIVIL JUDGE AT BANGALORE (CCH-26)
P & S.C. No. 176/2024

Between: 1. HAROHALLI SHANKAR UMASHANKAR, S/o Late. H R Shankarappa & Late. R B Basamma, Now aged about 66 years, Residing at #79/3, LMK Farm House, Near B K Circle SBI Bank, J P Nagar 8th Phase, Bangalore - 560076.
2. H S GANESH, S/o The Said Late. H R Shankarappa & Late. R B Basamma, Now aged about 69 years, Residing at #47, 30th Cross, 7th Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore - 560082.
3. MRUTHYUNJAYA H S, S/o The Said Late. H R Shankarappa & Late. R B Basamma, Now aged about 61 years, Residing at #640/A, 16th Cross, J P Nagar, 6th Phase, Bangalore - 560078. **...Petitioners**
And: Nil ...Respondent

PUBLIC NOTICE

WHEREAS, the above named Petitioners have made petition to this Court Under Section 372 of Indian Succession Act, for the grant of Succession Certificate, in respect of shares mentioned below in Schedule A shares as held jointly by late PARVATHAMMA (grandmother) & late. BANGALORE NAGARAJ SHANTHA MURTHY (maternal aunt) of the petitioners & schedule B shares held individually by the said late PARVATHAMMA & Schedule C shares held individually by late. R.B. BASAMMA (our mother). The said PARVATHAMMA expired at BANGALORE on 09-08-1990, the said late BANGALORE NAGARAJ SHANTHA MURTHY who expired on 19-08-2001 at Bangalore & the said late. R. B. BASAMMA expired at Bangalore on 13-11-2022.

Interested persons are hereby called upon to appear before this Court in person or through pleader duly instructed **on 26.04.2024 at 11.00 a.m.** to show cause against the Petition failing which the case will be decided as Ex-Parte.

SCHEDULE A
(Shares held jointly by late PARVATHAMMA & late BANGALORE NAGARAJ SHANTHA MURTHY)

Company Name	: TATA STEEL LTD
Folio No	: SIP0018321
Quantity	: 5250

SCHEDULE B
(Shares held individually by late PARVATHAMMA)

Company Name	: BATA INDIA LTD
Folio No	: 20604
Quantity	: 172
Company Name	: ACC LTD
Folio No	: P09864
Quantity	: 350

SCHEDULE C
(Shares held individually by late R B BASAMMA @ RAJENAHALLI BASANNA SASAMMA)

Company Name	: AUROBINDO PHARMA LTD
Folio No	: APL029262
Quantity	: 60
Company Name	: RELIANCE INDUSTRIES LTD
Folio No	: 103573257
Quantity	: 180

Given under my hand and the seal of the Court on the day 23.03.2024.
By Order of the Court, Senior Sheristedar, City Civil Court, Bengaluru.
Advocate for Petitioners.
SATHYANARAYANA GOPAL RAO, Advocate,
#142/3, 1st Floor, Shiva Complex, 5th Main,
Chamarajpet, Bangalore - 560018.
Mob: 9342848524 / 9342926437

IN THE COURT OF THE III ADDL. CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS & JUDGE AT BENGALURU (CCH-25)
P & S.C. No. 175/2024

Between: 1. VIVEKANAND MAHADEVAN, S/o late. D MAHADEVAN @ DEVENDRAN MAHADEVAN & late. SUSHILA MAHADEVAN, Now aged about 71 years, Residing at # 93, Kanakapura Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore - 560004.
2. PRITIKODIKAL W/o GAUTAM KODIKAL & D/o said late. D MAHADEVAN @ DEVENDRAN MAHADEVAN & Late SUSHILA MAHADEVAN Now aged about 70 years, Residing at # 45/2, Shivanjali, Kalena Agrahara, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore - 560076.
3. GITANJALI MAHADEVAN W/O K FAHEEM & D/o said late. D MAHADEVAN @ DEVENDRAN MAHADEVAN & late SUSHILA MAHADEVAN Now aged about 68 years, Residing at # 14, Omar Shariff Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560004. **...Petitioners**
And : Nil ...Respondent

PUBLIC NOTICE

WHEREAS, the above named Petitioners have made petition to this Court under Section 372 of Indian Succession Act for the grant of Succession Certificate solely in favour of Petitioner No. 3, in respect of the schedule shares, held individually by her late father (D MAHADEVAN @ DEVENDRAN MAHADEVAN) who expired on 19-03-2010 at Bangalore & her late mother (SUSHILA MAHADEVAN) having no shares at all, who expired on 24-09-2020 at Bangalore.

Interested persons are hereby called upon to appear before this Court in person or through pleader duly instructed **on 22.04.2024 at 11.00 a.m.** to show cause against the Petition failing which the case will be decided as Ex-Parte.

SCHEDULE
(SHARES HELD INDIVIDUALLY BY LATE FATHER OF THE PETITIONERS)

Company Name	: ABB INDIA LTD
Folio No.	: D0010231
Quantity	: 1020
Company Name	: HITACHI ENERGY LTD.

Given under my hand and seal of the court on the 20.03.2024.
By Order of the Court, Senior Sheristedar, City Civil Court, Bengaluru.
Advocate for Petitioners :
SATHYANARAYANA GOPAL RAO, Advocate
#142/3, 1st Floor, Shiva Complex, 5th Main,
Chamarajpet, Bangalore-560018.
Mob: 9342848524 & 9342926437

BEFORE THE HON'BLE HIGH COURT OF KERALA, ERNAKULAM
Crl. M.C. No. 1105 of 2023

Martin Robin and another
... Petitioners
Vs.
Geethu Manuel, aged 30 years, W/o Martin Robin, Kariankkal House, Nirmalagiri PO, now residing at No. 51, 6 Cross, Balai Nagar, S.G. Palaya, Bangalore - 560029
...3rd Respondent

The Respondent aforesaid:

Please take notice that the Crl.M.C presented by Advocate K. Mohanakannan, Counsel for the petitioner against Annexure.A3 (Crime No. 0155/2019 on the file of the Cherpu Police Station in Thrissur District pending in CC No. 857/19 of Judicial First Class Magistrate - 1, Thrissur.) The case stands posted to 4/4/24. If no appearance is made on your behalf either in person or through Advocate the matter will be decided Ex-parte.

Sd/-, K.Mohanakannan
Counsel for the Petitioner
Ernakulam
13.12.2023

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CUB TRUST AND EXCELLENCE SINCE 1904
CITY UNION BANK LIMITED
Credit Recovery and Management Department
Administrative Office : No. 24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612 001. **E-Mail id :** crmd@cityunionbank.in, **Ph :** 0435-2432322, **Fax :** 0435-2431746

POSSESSION NOTICE (Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of **City Union Bank Ltd.,** having its **Administrative Office** at **No.24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612001** and one of the Branch Offices at **590 HMT Layout, 4th Cross, R T Nagar, Bangalore - 560032, R T Nagar-Bangalore Branch** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(2) & (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice Dated **12-01-2024** calling upon the borrowers **No.1) Mr. Manjunath.H.P., S/o. Late Mr. Pappanna Munivallappa, No.71/J, 3rd Cross, Maramma Temple Road, Hulimavu, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore South, Karnataka - 560076. No.2) Mrs. Sushma, W/o. Mr. Manjunath.H.P., No.71/J, 3rd Cross, Maramma Temple Road, Hulimavu, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore South, Karnataka - 560076** to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice being **Rs.1,03,71,042/- (Rupees One Crore Three Lakh Seventy One Thousand and Forty Two only)** within **60 days** from the date of the said Notice with subsequent interest thereon from **05-01-2024** with monthly rests.

The borrowers above named having failed to repay the amount despite the receipt of the above referred statutory notice, NOTICE is hereby given to the borrowers above named and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the Properties described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on this 21st day of March 2024.

The borrowers above named in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of City Union Bank Ltd. for an amount of **Rs.1,06,61,691/- (Rupees One Crore Six Lakh Sixty One Thousand Six Hundred and Ninety One only)** and interest thereon from **21-03-2024** till the repayment of entire dues.

The borrowers' attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Immovable Property Mortgaged to our Bank
Schedule - A
Property - 1 : (Property Owned by Mr. Manjunath.H.P., S/o. Late Mr. Pappanna Munivallappa)

All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Site No.70/1 I, House List No.70/1 I, BBMP Khatha No.729/719/650/1/70/1 J, 70/JG Situated at Hulimavu Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk now comes under the limits of BBMP, Bangalore, Measuring : East to West 60 Feet, North to South 50 Feet, Totally measuring 3,000 Square Feet and bounded on : East by : Site No.71/1J, West by : Road, North by : Others Property and South by : Road.

Place : Bangalore, Date : 21-03-2024 **Authorised Officer**

Regd. Office : 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612 001, **CIN -** L65110TN1904PLC001287, **Telephone No.** 0435-2402322, **Fax :** 0435-2431746, **Website :** www.cityunionbank.com

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₹38,000 CR have been infused by foreign investors in Indian equity markets this month.

Risk of losing customers: Can Paytm regain users' trust?

In order to attract new customers, fintech firm Paytm has to tap into new financial products, services and increase value propositions for them

UMA KANNAN @ Bengaluru

THOUGH One97 Communications, the parent company of Paytm, said that the recent regulatory directive of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is specifically targeted at Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL) and not the broader Paytm ecosystem directly, fintech experts say this crisis is a setback for the company.

Brokerage firm Motilal Oswal Financial Services (MOFSL) says Paytm witnessed a significant decline in its Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) in February, and this trend is likely to persist into March. "While some of this decline can be attributed to the absence of new user additions, there is also a looming risk of losing customers and merchants to competitors. This competition is further impacting overall business activity on the platform," it said in a recent report.

Also, the RBI's restriction on PPBL from accepting new deposits has increased its competitors' app downloads as Google Pay and PhonePe have been witnessing substantial growth. The brokerage firm also anticipates a further decline in UPI transaction volume/value data in March 2024 as well. Paytm's UPI volume market share fell to 10.8% in February compared to 12.7% in the previous month. In value terms, the market share fell to 8.5% in February compared to 10.3% in January.

The central bank barred PPBL from accepting deposits, credit transactions and top ups in any customer account after February 29, and it further extended it to March 15. The RBI cited persistent non-compliances and continued material supervisory concerns in the bank. National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) granted approval to One97 Communications to participate in UPI as a Third-Party Application Provider (TPAP) under multi-bank model. This means, Paytm can operate UPI services. Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, State Bank of India and YES Bank have started acting as Payment System Provider banks to OCL.

Paytm will need to ensure a smooth transition and leverage its brand recognition to retain existing merchants. This serves as an opportunity.
Somdutta Singh, CEO, Assiduus Global

Ravi Teja Gupta, Founder, Guptaji Invests, said that payment banks' business model is not a profitable business model as payments banks can't provide loans. He said the fintech firm's brand value will be negatively affected, but Paytm can recover by introducing innovative fintech products.

Talking about Paytm's business and its future, Gupta said some of the business models Paytm can enter instantly are the business of giving loans like BharatPe, peer-to-peer lending like 12% club, credit card bills app like Cred, etc. He also added that the third-party licence will make Paytm an asset light model.

Rebuilding trust

Somdutta Singh, Serial Entrepreneur, Founder and CEO Assiduus Global Inc said this is a setback for the company. It disrupts their ability to offer a comprehensive financial ecosystem and potentially dampens growth. "If I were in their position, they would now likely focus on rebuilding trust with the regulator and exploring partnerships with other banks to fill the gap. Immediately, onboarding new merchants under new banks might create a temporary disconnect. Paytm will need to ensure a smooth transition and leverage its brand recognition to retain existing merchants. This serves as an opportunity to forge stronger partnerships with the new partner banks," Singh added.

According to the angel investor, a well-structured third-party license can be a game-changer. It could allow Paytm to tap into new financial products and services, increasing their value proposition for customers and attracting new ones. Although Paytm is anticipated to retain the majority of its merchant base, following approvals from the NPCI, it is expected that around 15-20% of merchants (15% of whom have settlement accounts with PPBL) may churn, MOFSL said.

It also said that the recent regulatory restrictions have significantly impacted Paytm's business environment and growth outlook. Despite the company's extensive reach, its ability to mitigate the business impact will largely depend on the execution capabilities over the coming quarters.

Paytm Payments Bank will cut about 20% of staff. This will affect at least 550 employees. What will happen to the future of employees? Somdutta Singh said retaining the remaining employees requires a strategic approach including reskilling and redeploying.

"Retention bonuses or profit-sharing schemes could motivate employees to stay. Transparency about future plans and addressing employee concerns can foster trust and commitment," Singh added. On PPBL employees, Paytm spokesperson told TNIE that as OCL and PPBL are distinct entities, they cannot comment on PPBL's internal decisions. "However, it's important to note that the regulator has not mandated a shutdown of PPBL but has imposed certain operational restrictions," Paytm said. It added that the transition to working with new banking partners does not signify a change in its business model. Instead, it opens up opportunities for diversification and leveraging the extensive networks of these banks to enhance our service offerings and market reach.

When asked about the impact on its credit business, Paytm said, "PPBL was not a partner for our credit operations so there is no impact. Our focus remains steadfast on delivering innovative financial solutions and services through the Paytm platform, in collaboration with our extensive network of bank partners and financial institutions. This alignment ensures our credit business continues to thrive and expand."

MONEY MATTERS

HOW TO BUILD KNOWLEDGE FUNNEL FOR MONEY

FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

RAJAS KELKAR

(The author is editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

KNOWLEDGE is a big differentiator in your wealth creation process. You must make that your strength or you will be unable to change your finances significantly.

In an era of information overload, you must learn to use filters. In the book titled 'The Design of Business' by Canadian management guru Roger Martin, there is a concept of design thinking. While the concept of the knowledge funnel is primarily used by businesses to innovate and create new products and services to solve market problems, you can use it to make informed investment decisions.

Making sense of information

The first stage in the innovation funnel is about mystery. You are overwhelmed by too much information around you. It is not easy to make sense of the data. For example, you may want to know the impact of inflation on your money. You want to understand the efforts taken to arrest the rise in inflation. You must rely on a lot of numbers. The mystery in all the information overload is the interconnectivity of those numbers. High inflation leads to high-interest rates. That makes borrowing expensive for businesses and individuals. It increases the cost of operation for businesses, and a rising interest rate scenario is not considered a suitable time for business expansion.

As an individual, you will not incur a significant expenditure if inflation squeezes your finances.

On the other hand, some businesses make money when inflation rises. They can pass on rising costs to customers and profit. Share prices of such companies do well. As a consumer, you are hit by inflation. However, if you are an investor in the stock market, you can still benefit from the growth in profits of companies that manage their finances well during high inflation. All the above is mysterious for someone unfamiliar with the world of finance.

EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

Thumb rules

The next stage of the innovation funnel is heuristic. It means adopting thumb rules that work to solve a problem. While investing, you must look at established thumb rules that can show you the way through the finance mystery.

If you are new to the world of investments, you must start saving money regularly. Once you have a surplus every month, you need to give a direction to that money. The concept of asset allocation matters a lot. You cannot put all your eggs in one basket for any reason. You must make an appropriate asset allocation based on your risk appetite. A thumb rule for those starting is to subtract their age from 100, and you get the money that should go to equities. Your ability to withstand risk is higher when you are younger than when you are older. As you age, you automatically reduce your exposure to equity assets by that thumb rule. The balance can go into a fixed deposit, gold or any other fixed-income asset class.

Action plan

After understanding the mystery and heuristic, you reach a stage of the algorithm. While investing, it is not enough to seize one right moment. You need to find a way to do so all the time. You need to stay invested in the stock market for as long as possible. Not just that, you need to invest regularly, too.

That way, you can ride through market cycles and buy more equity assets at low prices. Accumulating wealth at the end of your life depends on your ability to execute that action plan.

You can own shares of fundamentally strong like legendary American investor Warren Buffett for a long time. You can do that directly or indirectly through exchange-traded funds or mutual funds.

Many tools are at your disposal today that can help you identify the right companies or funds. Systematic investment plans are one such solution that works like a repetitive mechanism. Some fintech companies allow you to own a basket of stocks based on your interest and risk appetite.

You can use these effectively throughout your investment life and create wealth.

MONEY-WISE

HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU NEED FOR RETIREMENT?

FINANCIAL ADVICE

PV SUBRAMANYAM

writes at www.subramoney.com and has authored the best seller 'Retire Rich - Invest ₹40 a day'

TRY Google for an answer and you will get a million articles and a zillion calculators trying to answer this question (on retirement). There are answers at two extremes of the spectrum – imagine one calculator tells you that the need is for ₹13.25 crore and the other calculator saying you need ₹7.6 crore! Which one would you believe? Why? Welcome to the world of finance and psychology. To catch your attention, it is necessary for me to say 'One Million Dollars is not sufficient for retirement' – this is bound to catch your attention. Now that I have your attention, I need to scare you so much that you will take action! Now a movie which shows that the son is treating the father badly has to show the son slapping the father. Just shouting has no impact, correct? So, the financial media also has to exaggerate - at least a little.

The financial services industry has to compete with all other advertisements which encourage IMMEDIATE consumption. Amongst all this, asking you to save / invest for your old age becomes somebody else's job! Pity the planner who is trying to ask you to postpone your expenses to your age of 60! All the money that you invest will grow and be available for you to spend – after a little time that is all. Also, calculators should ask your current age, retirment age, do you want to leave a corpus for your children, how long you think you will live, and many other questions. People designing calculators have to fight with the editorial team which keeps saying 'people will not answer 34 questions, please reduce the number of questions' pressure! Retirement calculators are very difficult to design – you do not find any Indian calculator telling you how to withdraw during retirement. This is another big gap – and is really a tough call for the 75-year-old to decide whether to spend well for the next 5 years or worry whether he will run out of money at 88 years– and then what happens. Some calculators are comprehensive. Also, even interactive websites can only have static calculators – which means you need to keep checking regularly with various values to ensure that you do not run out of money. For most Indians 'Reverse Mortgage' has a negative connotation.

The financial services industry would like you to believe that you need a king's ransom to retire – so that you invest large amounts of money! If you are caught in all this paradox, there is really only one weapon – get better equipped to deal with so many advertisers, writers, financial planners, agents and television experts. Like so many things in life, Retirement Planning is also nice to do it yourself and seek outside help from an expert instead of just handing it over and hoping it will turn out fine. In retirement it may mean running out of money exactly when your need is highest.

Public sector banks' dividend payout may exceed ₹15k cr in FY24

PTI @ New Delhi

PUBLIC sector banks (PSBs) are likely to pay a dividend in excess of ₹15,000 crore for the financial year ending March 2024 on the back of improved profitability, according to sources.

In the first three quarters of the current financial year, all 12 PSBs earned a total profit of ₹98,000 crore, only ₹7,000 crore less than the entire FY23. PSBs earned the highest-ever aggregate net profit of ₹1.05 lakh crore during FY23 compared to ₹66,539.98 crore earned in 2021-22.

As a result, the government earned a dividend of ₹13,804 crore, 58% higher than the ₹ 8,718 crore paid out in the previous financial year.

Since the profit in the current financial year would be much higher than the previous year, so will be the dividend payout to the government, sources said. Going by the past record, the dividend payout for FY24 should be in excess of ₹15,000 crore, they added.

Earlier in January, the Reserve Bank, in its draft guidelines, proposed to allow banks having net non-performing assets (NPAs) ratio of less than 6 per cent to declare dividends. As per the prevailing norms last updated in 2005, banks need to have an NNPA ratio of up to 7% to become eligible for declaration of dividends. The central bank has proposed that the new guidelines should come into effect from FY25 onwards.

The draft lays down directions that need to be followed by banks' boards while considering proposals of dividend payouts, which include consideration on divergence in classification and provisioning for NPAs as well. A commercial bank should have a minimum total capital adequacy of 11.5% to be eligible for declaring dividends, the circular said.

EPFO adds 16.02 lakh members in January

PTI @ New Delhi

RETIREMENT fund body EPFO added a net 16.02 lakh subscribers in January 2024, according to payroll data released on Sunday.

Around 8.08 lakh members were enrolled for the first time in January 2024, a labour ministry statement said. The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's (EPFO) provisional payroll highlighted that the EPFO has added 16.02 lakh members on a net basis in January 2024. A noticeable aspect of the data is the dominance of the 18-25 age group, constituting a significant 56.41% of the total new members added in January 2024 indicating the majority of individuals joining the organised workforce are youth, primarily first-time job seekers. The payroll data highlighted that approximately 12.17 lakh members exited and subsequently rejoined EPFO. Gender-wise analysis of payroll data unveiled that out of 8.08 lakh new members, around 2.05 lakh are new female members.

TVS chairman's family ink non-compete pact

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Chennai

THE family members of Venu Srinivasan, Chairman Emeritus and Managing Director of TVS Motor Company Limited have entered into a non-compete agreement over the use of TVS brand across different business segments including two-wheeler, auto after-market and tractors business.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was executed between Venu Srinivasan, his wife and business leader Mallika Srinivasan, and their children Lakshmi Venu, and Sudarshan Venu on March 21.

Sudarshan Venu, Managing Director of TVS Motor has agreed not to use TVS trademark, among others, in manufacturing and supply of aluminium and magnesium die castings for original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and the after-market, TVS Motor said in exchange filings on Saturday.

He has also agreed to not compete in the business of agricultural machinery including tractors, and self-propelled farm equipment, among other things for a defined period.

Sudarshan Venu, Managing Director of TVS Motor has agreed not to use TVS trademark, among others, in manufacturing and supply of aluminium and magnesium die castings for original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and the after-market. He has also agreed to not compete in the business of agricultural machinery. –TVS Motor

Agreement to avoid trademark tussles

The members of the TVS family had executed and completed a family settlement based on a Memorandum of Family Agreement dated 10 December 2020 recording the oral understanding reached between the members of the TVS Family, along with other agreements and understandings executed pursuant and further thereto amongst the various family groups of the larger TVS family.

Mallika Srinivasan and Lakshmi Venu have agreed that they will not use certain trademarks including TVS, in two-wheeler and three-wheeler vehicle business, financial services and real estate, among other businesses.

The parties are part of the promoter, promoter group but the company is not a party to the MOU, the filings noted.

"This MOU doesn't in any way impact the Company's business adversely, and its ability to continue its business as currently conducted today is not impacted," it said.

Mallika Srinivasan is the Chairman and Managing Director of Chennai-based leading tractor maker Tractor and Farm Equipment Limited (TAFE), part of Amalgamations group. Lakshmi Venu currently serves in the board of TVS Motor Company and also Deputy Managing Director of TAFE Motors and Tractors Limited.

This comes after the family settlement based on a Memorandum of Family Agreement (MFA) between the members of the TVS Family made on December 10, 2020.

TVS family members, including the parties had completed a family settlement recording the oral understanding reached between the members of the TVS Family, along with other agreements and understandings among various family groups of the larger TVS family and persons controlled by them (past, present and future).

The family settlement took effect from February 4, 2022.

The parties have arrived at a further understanding among themselves in addition to the MFA, including, regarding usage of the TVS brands, a letter written by Venu Srinivasan said.

The large TVS family members in December 2020 agreed for restructuring of the group business with various demergers and amalgamations managed by different members of the family.

Amir comes out of retirement with T20 WC in mind

Pakistan left-arm pacer Mohammad Amir has decided to come out of international retirement and make himself available for selection for the upcoming T20 World Cup in the Americas in June. Amir, who was banned from cricket for five years between 2010 to 2015 on spot-fixing charges and was also briefly jailed for his crime, had retired in 2021.

Samson steals the show

On a day where the focus was on two keeper-batters, RR captain comes out on top

GOMESH S @ Chennai

IT was always going to be about KL Rahul and Sanju Samson — the two keeper-batters and captains. The former, coming back from an injury layoff, had expressed his interest in throwing his name in the ring for the national comeback in the shortest format. The latter, perpetually rated for his talent and what he is capable of despite not getting a long rope in a specific position.

So, when Rahul and Samson walked out for the toss on Sunday afternoon at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium, the contest was all about how the two keepers fare as batters and what they do for their respective teams. By the time the match ended, here is how it looked — Samson hit an unbeaten 82 from 52 balls as his team beat LSG by 20 runs. Rahul, meanwhile, opened the batting and finished the day with 58 from 44 balls while trying to chase 194.

From the outset, it might seem like there was a clear winner in Samson, but there was more to it. For starters, both the innings had a common trait. They started slow before getting into their groove and accelerating. Samson, at one point, was batting on 21 from as many balls. Rahul, on the other hand, was on 26 from 26. Samson hit consecutive sixes to get himself going while Rahul hit two sixes and a four in three balls to race to 42 off 29.

However, this is where the commonality ends. Samson was batting first on a surface where the ball was not necessarily coming onto the bat. RR had lost both the openers and they had to reassess and see how the pitch is behaving and what is a good total for them to defend. Which explains the run-a-ball 21 Samson was on.

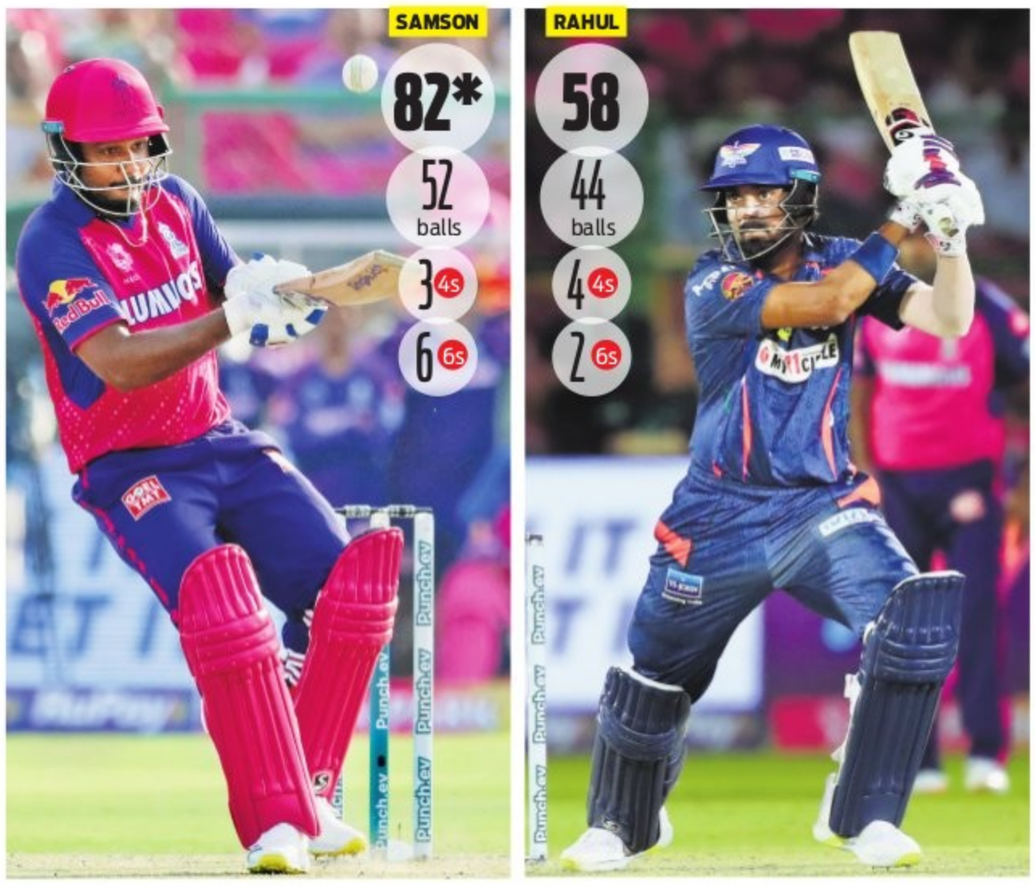
In fact, it was not the kind of approach Samson had followed in the past — he has been prone to be aggressive irrespective of the situation and as a result, losing his wicket and leaving his team in a spot of bother. Here, however, the 29-year-old Kerala batter was calculative. He waited, knew whom to take on when and had taken along another player who had been inconsistent in the past — Riyan Parag. Together they added 93 runs from 59 balls as RR went from 49/2 to 142/3. Even as Parag got out, Samson kept going. He took on Yash Thakur and Mohsin Khan, helping RR get to what Rahul later called an "over-par" total.

Meanwhile, Rahul stood at the non-striker's end and watched his team lose three quick wickets in as many overs. While Deepak Hooda counter-attacked, Rahul didn't. He paced his innings as always, strolling at run-a-ball until 26. Although one could argue that they lost early wickets and Rahul needed to play the anchor, the captain has always batted like that for LSG — Rahul's strike rate last season before he got injured was 113.22 — because of how others bat around him. It is a high risk approach in this format. Something that could cost the game every once in a while.

On Sunday, to continue the same approach despite knowing how the pitch played out and what the team needed cost Rahul and his team. They fell short by 20 runs despite the effort of Nicholas Pooran (64 n.o off 41 balls) and Rahul. Yes, credit should be given to RR's death bowling, especially Sandeep Sharma. At the same time, it is hard to ignore Rahul's approach which is too familiar and prone to fail more often than not. It is not what he would want to continue if he wishes to return to the national fold.

Asked how he felt about getting runs on his comeback, Rahul said in a post-match interaction, "When you get runs, you always feel good. But it's important for us to end up on the winning side. That gives more satisfaction." Indeed. And on Sunday, the clear winner was Sanju Samson.

Brief scores: RR 193/4 in 20 ovs (Samson 82 n.o) **bt** LSG 173/6 in 20 ovs (Pooran 64 n.o, Rahul 58; Boult 2/35).



RR's Sanju Samson (L) and LSG's KL Rahul in action during their IPL meeting on Sunday | SPORTZPICS

BATTLE OF BATTING HEAVYWEIGHTS

As Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Punjab Kings take on each other, a look...

KOHLI V CURRAN

Virat Kohli's rustiness was visible in his first match and he would want to shake it off soon. However, it might not be easy against Sam Curran and Arshdeep Singh, both of whom can trouble him from around the wicket.

CAN PATIDAR GET A BREAK?

Since his Test debut, Rajat Patidar has had a bad luck that would make anyone feel sorry for him. In a tournament like IPL, it could be very easy to go downhill and Patidar would not want that to happen.

LIVINGSTONE V MAXWELL

If Glenn Maxwell is RCB's trump card in the middle-order, Liam Livingstone is PBKS'. Maxwell has been in good form in the past couple of years, but he did not have good game in Chennai. How Livingstone and Maxwell perform could well determine the fortunes of their respective teams.

TODAY'S MATCHE Royal Challengers Bengaluru vs Punjab Kings, Benglauru

Live on Star Sports and JioCinema from 7.30 PM

Pandya's experience in vain as Gill makes happy start

KALYANI MANGALE @ Chennai

WAY before the schedule of the 17th season of the Indian Premier League was announced, the one contest fans were looking forward to the match-up between Mumbai Indians and Gujarat Titans. Not just because of the quality of cricket these two teams have shown but also for the personnel changes behind the scenes. Hardik Pandya took over the captaincy of the five-time champions, Mumbai Indians from India's all-format leader Rohit Sharma, and Shubman Gill getting the nod to lead the Titans after his most successful season with the bat.

With the stage set for the battle, Pandya won the toss and opted to field first on the tricky pitch expecting assistance from dew later and took on himself to bowl first the first over. Considering this was his return to action at this level since the ankle injury he suffered in the ODI World Cup, he struggled in the beginning and gave away 27 runs in the first three overs. Many eyebrows were raised when Pandya took it upon himself to start the bowling despite having Jasprit Bumrah available to bowl. Pandya corrected the course when he handed the ball to Bumrah, who provided the much-needed breakthrough for the side.

Knowing how much Gill has troubled Mumbai in the past with his strike rate of 151, it was wise of Pandya to bring veteran Piyush Chawla into the mix. He did provide a breakthrough and it played well in the hands of Mumbai as Pandya could use South Africa's Gerald Coetzee, known to take wickets in the middle overs. Having someone like Bumrah with slower deliveries up his sleeves made Pandya's job as a captain easy. And the local lad didn't disappoint with the wickets of high-hitting David Miller and B Sai Sudharsan, who primarily played the role of anchor.

MI captain Hardik Pandya during the match against GT on Sunday | AFP

Pandya's captaincy, other than probably handing Luke Wood the 18th over showcased the fact that how acutely aware he is of the conditions at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. Mumbai would have been happy to restrict Gujarat to 168.

This being his first-ever leadership opportunity in the league, that too against one of the most successful sides, it was natural to expect that Gill was under tremendous pressure. However, given how much he has grown in the short period with the bat, there were no surprises when the 24-year-old was fast-tracked to captaincy. "He is mature beyond his age given his international experience and the talent he has," Vikram Solanki, Gujarat Titans' Director of Cricket, told the broadcasters in the first innings.

With this much spotlight already on him, the excessive dew made Gill's job extremely hard. Azmatullah Omarzai, who started with a slip, gave Gujarat a brilliant start with the wicket of Ishan Kishan first and later that of Naman Dhir. However, the dew forced Gill to introduce his team's ace, Rashid Khan in the powerplay.

From then on till the 13th over, whatever Gill threw at Dewald Brevis and Rohit Sharma, the duo had no problems answering it. Despite almost everything stacked against his side, Gill along with Rashid and slower deliveries from Mohit helped Gujarat turn the match in their favour in the final four overs. GT eventually won the match by six runs. **Brief scores:** GT 168/6 in 20 ovs (B Sai Sudharsan 45, Jasprit Bumrah 3/14) **bt** MI 162/9 in 20 ovs (Rohit 43, Brevis 46).

Endrick makes history as Brazil beat England

AGENCIES @ London

BRAZIL'S new boss Dorival Junior started his bid to revive the five-time world champions with a 1-0 win against England as teenage sensation Endrick bagged his first international goal in Saturday's friendly at Wembley. Coming off their worst period for over 60 years, Brazil hope Dorival Junior can trigger a revival in time to challenge for the 2026 World Cup. This was a first significant step in the right direction for the Selecao, who marked their manager's debut with victory against an England side expected to make a strong challenge to win Euro 2024.

On a cathartic evening for Brazil after their wretched 2023, it was fitting the highly-rated Endrick bagged Brazil's late winner. The Palmeiras forward, due to join Real Madrid in July, has been tipped to succeed Neymar as Brazil's latest superstar.

Endrick (L) rejoices after scoring against England | AFP

Fastest goals

PARIS: Austria's Christoph Baumgartner scored one of the fastest ever international goals inside seven seconds and was then followed by a similarly lightning strike by Germany's Florian Wirtz. Baumgartner went into the record books during a friendly 2-0 win over Slovakia in Bratislava. Baumgartner matched the previous record of seven seconds it took Lukas Podolski to score for Germany against Ecuador in May, 2013. Later, Wirtz was just as fast off the mark against France in a friendly in Lyon which Germany won 2-0.

EXPRESS READ

PCB confident of hosting CT next year

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is optimistic that it will be able to host Champions Trophy next year as a delegation, including security expert, of the International Cricket Council (ICC) is set to reach the country on Monday to inspect the ongoing preparations for the prestigious tournament.

Odisha FC clinch maiden IWL title

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha FC emerged champions of the Indian Women's League 2023-24 at the Kalinga Stadium here with a 6-0 win over Kickstart FC, thereby qualifying for the AFC Women's Champions League. Odisha ended with 31 points from 12 matches. Gokulam Kerala FC finished two points behind.

Swiss Open: Srikanth goes down fighting in semis

BASEL: Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth's winning run at the Swiss Open Super 300 badminton tournament came to an end after a semifinal loss to Chinese Taipei's Lin Chun-Yi here. The former world number one squandered a one-match lead to go down 21-15, 9-21, 18-21 in a gruelling last-four contest that lasted one hour and five minutes on Saturday night.

Sabalenka bows out, Swiatek cruises

AGENCIES @ Miami

A TRAUMATIC week for World No 2 Aryna Sabalenka came to an end with a third round, three set loss in the Miami Open to Ukrainian Anhelina Kalinina on Saturday.

The 6-4, 1-6, 6-1 win for the 36th ranked Kalinina prompted Sabalenka, who had kept her emotions in check through both of her games at Hard Rock Stadium, to smash her racket violently three times into the court and she walked off without a handshake with her opponent.

On Monday, Belarusian Sabalenka's former boyfriend, ex-NHL player Konstantin Koltsov, died in Miami after what police called an "apparent suicide".

The pair had been in a relationship until recently and Sabalenka only announced they were no longer together following the death.

World No 1 Iga Swiatek in action against Camila Giorgi | AFP

On Friday, she looked in control as she defeated her close friend Paula Badosa of Spain in straight sets on the grandstand court.

But given the late slot on the main stadium court, Sabalenka looked to be feeling the strain somewhat more as she struggled for any kind of consistency.

World No 1 Iga Swiatek had no trouble in beating Italy's Camila Giorgi 6-2, 6-1 as the rain-impacted tournament packed in the bignames including postponed matches from Friday.

Race is on to make Paris Olympics mosquito-free

AGENCIES @ Paris

France is scrambling to make sure that that virus-carrying tiger mosquitos, a growing menace in Europe, don't spoil the Paris Olympics for athletes and fans, with millions of visitors due in the French capital for the summer Games.

The Asian tiger mosquito has made its home in much of northern Europe, including France, over the past two decades, spreading diseases such as dengue, chikungunya and zika.

Climate change is said to be behind its easy adaptation to colder climes, with authorities recently declaring Normandy in the northwest, the last remaining mosquito-free region in all of France, infested just like the rest of the country. Authorities have tried in vain to get rid of the insects, including by fumigating parts of Paris, a technique regularly used in tropical cities. But with the start of the Paris Games only four months away, they are on the clock, with experts warning that a tiger mosquito bite could destroy an athlete's chance of making it to the starting line.

"When you are sick with dengue, you won't be jumping over any hurdles," said Didier Fontenille, an entomologist and expert on vector-borne diseases. "The host cities and especially the Olympic Village must be kept mosquito-free," he said. Health authorities have promised "increased surveillance" of the mosquito threat, which has been notoriously difficult to eliminate.

FORMULA ONE

'Smooth operator' Sainz savours Australian GP victory

AGENCIES @ Melbourne

CARLOS Sainz said he was savouring the moment Sunday after a "rollercoaster" start to the season culminated in a fighting victory at the Australian Grand Prix. While Sainz celebrated, it was a disastrous day for pole-sitter Max Verstappen, who limped out with smoke billowing from his car after being passed the Ferrari rider on lap two. Sainz's teammate Charles Leclerc made it a 1-2 finish for Ferrari while McLaren's Lando Norris finished third.Sainz, nicknamed Smooth Operator, started the year being informed he had been dumped by Ferrari to make way for Lewis Hamilton next season, leaving him without a drive in 2025.

The 29-year-old Spaniard responded with a podium place in the opening race of the year in Bahrain before being struck down with appendicitis ahead of Saudi Arabia.

Surgery and a bed-ridden week later, he pulled off a remarkable win in Melbourne after many doubted he should even be in the car so soon. "It's not only the last two weeks. It's the whole start to the year in general, how the year started with the news of the non-renewal," said Sainz, reflecting on a whirlwind 2024.

"Then you get yourself fit. You get yourself ready for the start of the season, pushing flat out. "And then you get to Bahrain. You do a good podium. You say, 'OK, now the season is starting well and I can keep the momentum going'. "And suddenly, boom, you're missing a race in Jeddah and the operation." Sainz said he was unsure whether he could recover in time to be back in the cockpit just two weeks later.

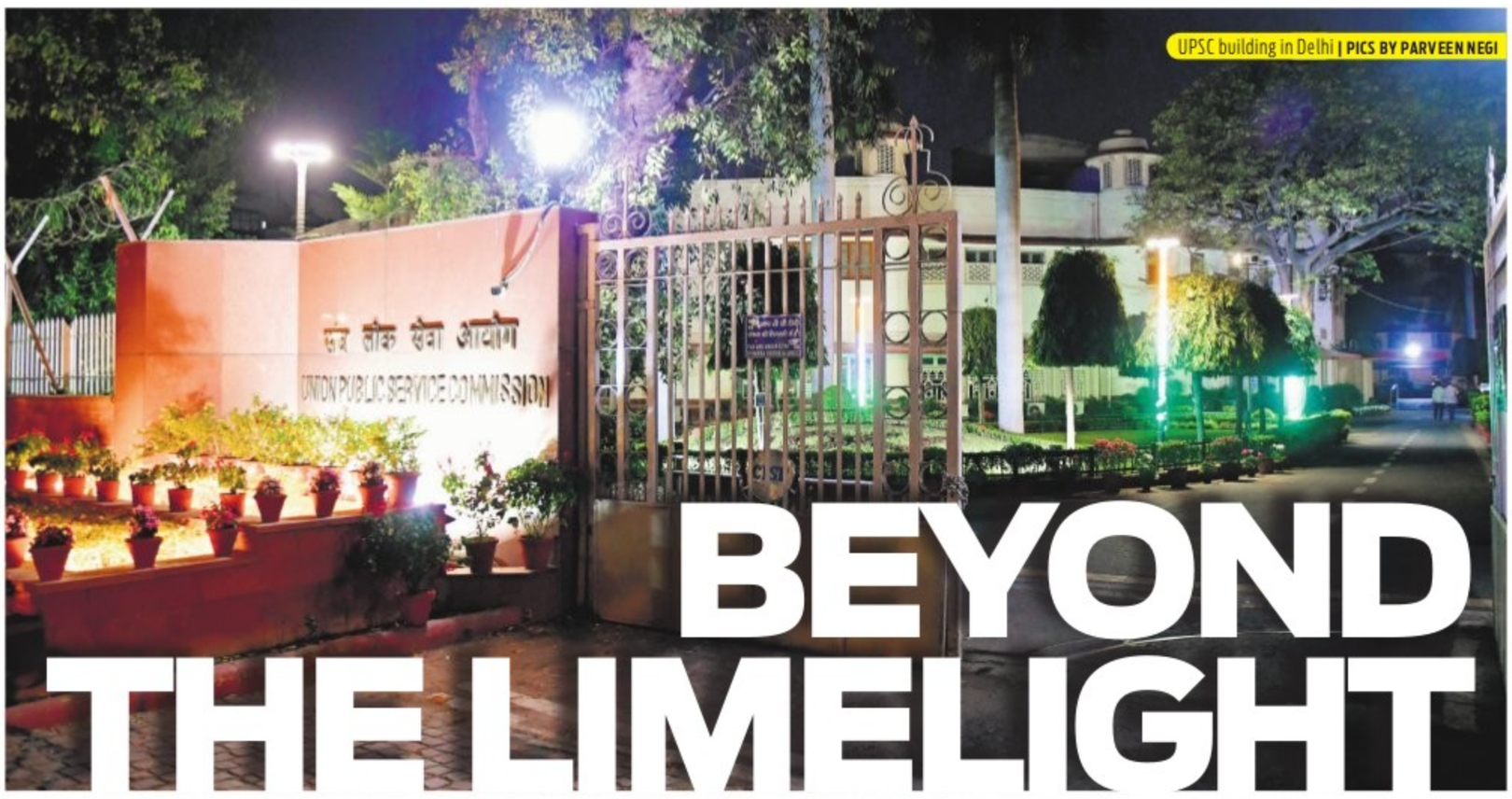
Carlos Sainz (L) & Charles Leclerc (C) after a memorable outing on Sunday | AFP

But he was determined to try and followed a strict recovery regime, spending time in a hyperbaric chamber twice a day and programming how long he exercised and what he ate. "Obviously, a lot of unknowns. Am I going to be back fit? Am I going to be back feeling still good with the car?," he said. "And then suddenly you come back and win. So, yes, life is a rollercoaster sometimes, but it can be really nice and good to you sometimes. (I'm) just letting it sink in and enjoying the moment."

While Sainz has no seat yet for 2025, Leclerc said he was certain to be snapped up.

"He's one of the highest rated drivers in the paddock and he's been extremely strong every time he has been in a Formula One car and has shown it multiple times," Leclerc said.

Australian GP results (top 5): **1.** Carlos Sainz Jr (ESP/Ferrari) 1hr 20min 26.843sec; **2.** Charles Leclerc (MON/Ferrari) +2.366; **3.** Lando Norris (GBR/McLaren) +5.904; **4.** Oscar Piastri (AUS/McLaren) +35.770; **5.** Sergio Perez (MEX/Red Bull) +56.309.



UPSC building in Delhi | PICS BY PARVEEN NEGI

BEYOND THE LIMELIGHT

WHAT IS UPSC-CSE BEYOND IAS, IPS & IFS?

THE most popular examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is the Civil Services Examination (CSE), which draws aspirants vying for prestigious roles in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Indian Police Service (IPS), and beyond. Today, we explore the heartbeat of UPSC recruitment: the Civil Services Examination.

This exam, renowned for its intensity, serves as the gateway to Group A and Group B Civil Services. With an array of 24 services on offer, many aspirants focus solely on the high-profile IAS posts, unaware of the other opportunities that UPSC-CSE offers. Candidates can tailor their career paths to align with their passions, finding employment in diverse ministries such as Information and Broadcasting, Finance, and more.

All these services are rewarding and salaries for both Grade A and Grade B officers start from ₹56,100 excluding Travelling Allowance and Dearness Allowance, and House Rent Allowance. Below is a comprehensive compilation of services available through the CSE, with insights into responsibilities, the ministries they serve, and training centres:

All India Services

1 INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE (IAS)

- **Role:** IAS officers are responsible for the administrative functions of the Indian government. They are involved in policy formulation, implementation, and overall governance at the district, state, and Central levels. Positions can range from District Magistrate, Collector, Head of Public Sector Units, Cabinet Secretary
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions
- **Training:** Foundation Course at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), Mussoorie

2 INDIAN POLICE SERVICE (IPS)

- **Role:** IPS officers are responsible for law enforcement, maintenance of public order, and internal security. They lead and manage the police force too
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs
- **Training:** Foundation Course at LBSNAA then, specialised training at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA), Hyderabad

Group 'A' Civil Services

vital list

3 INDIAN FOREIGN SERVICE (IFS)

- **Role:** IFS officers represent India in diplomatic missions abroad and are involved in framing and implementing foreign policies. Positions can range from Foreign Secretary, Ambassador, High Commissioner and so on
- **Ministry:** Ministry of External Affairs
- **Training:** Foundation Course at LBSNAA, followed by training at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), New Delhi

4 INDIAN REVENUE SERVICE (IRS) - INCOME TAX

- **Role:** IRS officers in the Income Tax department look after assessment, collection, and administration of direct taxes, primarily income tax
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue
- **Training:** Foundation Course at LBSNAA, followed by training at the National Academy of Direct Taxes (NADT), Nagpur

5 INDIAN REVENUE SERVICE (IRS) - CUSTOMS AND CENTRAL EXCISE:

- **Role:** IRS officers in the Customs and Central Excise department are responsible for enforcing customs and excise laws, preventing smuggling, and facilitating trade
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue
- **Training:** National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN), Faridabad

6 INDIAN AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS SERVICE (IA&AS)

- **Role:** IA&AS officers are responsible for auditing the accounts of the Central and state governments, public sector undertakings, and other autonomous bodies
- **Ministry:** Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)
- **Training:** National Academy of Audit and Accounts (NAAA), Shimla

7 INDIAN CIVIL ACCOUNTS SERVICE (ICAS)

- **Role:** ICAS officers manage the accounting and financial functions of the Centre's ministries and departments
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure
- **Training:** National Institute of Financial Management (NIFM), Faridabad and Institute of Government Accounts and Finance (INGAF), New Delhi

8 INDIAN CORPORATE LAW SERVICE (ICLS)

- **Role:** ICLS officers regulate corporate affairs, ensure compliance with corporate laws, and facilitate corporate governance
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- **Training:** Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), Manesar

9 INDIAN DEFENCE ACCOUNTS SERVICE (IDAS)

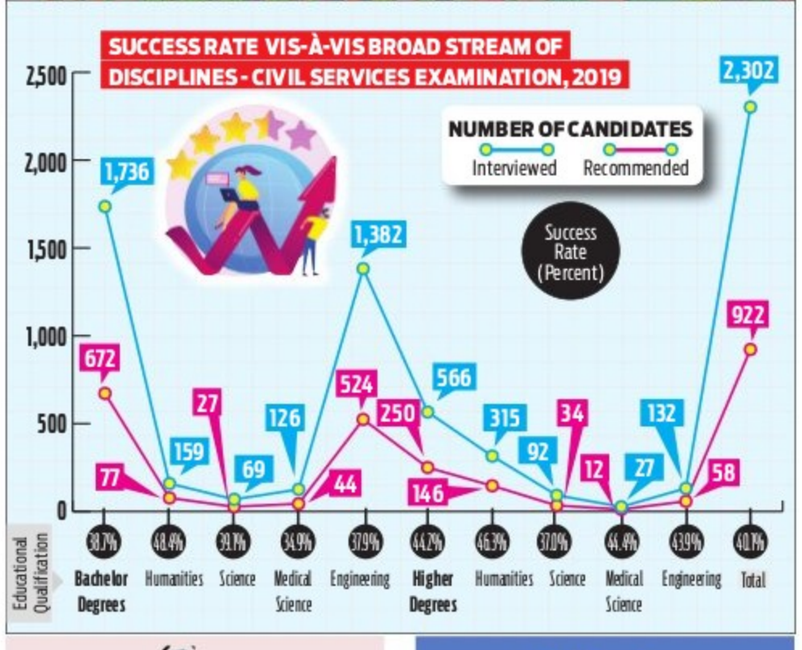
- **Role:** IDAS officers are responsible for managing the financial and accounting aspects of the Indian Defence Services
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Defence
- **Training:** First trained at CENTRAD, New Delhi and Institute of Defence Financial Management (IDFM), Pune

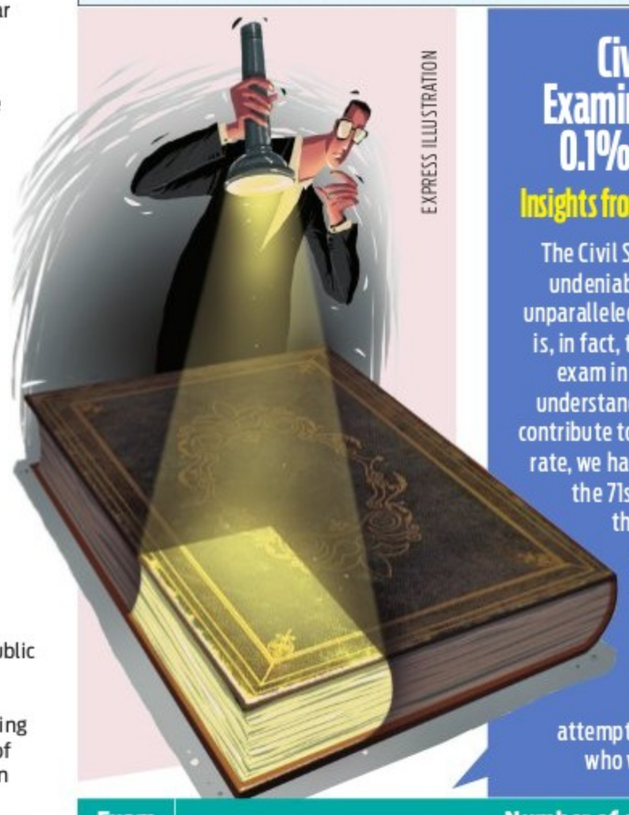
10 INDIAN DEFENCE ESTATES SERVICE (IDES)

- **Role:** IDES officers manage the defence land and real estate assets of the Ministry of Defence
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Defence
- **Training:** National Institute of Defence Estates, New Delhi

11 INDIAN INFORMATION SERVICE (IIS)

- **Role:** IIS officers are involved in public relations, media management, and communication functions of the government. Responsible for managing the media wing of the Government of India. Officers from this cadre work in different media departments like Doordarshan, All India Radio and so on
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
- **Training:** Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), New Delhi





EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

Civil Service Examination and its 0.1% success rate

Insights from 71st Annual Report

The Civil Service Examination, undeniably renowned for its unparalleled level of competition, is, in fact, the most competitive exam in India. However, to understand the intricacies that contribute to its mere 0.1% success rate, we have taken figures from the 71st Annual Report for the year 2020-2021 to not only decipher the competitive landscape but also delve into trends concerning gender dynamics and also the number of attempts made by candidates who were successful

Exam	Number of candidates who applied for Civil Services (Main) Examination, 2019																	
	Applied for Prelims			Appeared for Prelims			Appeared for Mains			Appeared for Interview			Recommended			Success Rate (Percentage)*		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Femlae	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Prelims	768175	367086	1135261	390671	177611	568282	9964	1510	11474	1848	454	2302	702	220	922	0.18	0.12	0.16

12 INDIAN ORDNANCE FACTORIES SERVICE (IOFS)

- **Role:** IOFS officers are responsible for the management and production of ordnance and military equipment in Indian Ordnance Factories
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Defence
- **Training:** Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), Nagpur

13 INDIAN POSTAL SERVICE (IPOS)

- **Role:** IPoS officers manage the postal and financial services
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Communications & IT, Department of Posts
- **Training:** Rafi Ahmed Kidwai National Postal Academy (RAKNPA), Ghaziabad

14 INDIAN COMMUNICATION FINANCE SERVICES (ICFS)/INDIAN POST & TELECOMMUNICATION ACCOUNTS AND FINANCE SERVICE (IP&TAFS)

- **Role:** Earlier known as Indian Post & Telecommunication Accounts and Finance Service (IP&TAFS), ICFS officers handle the accounting and financial management of the Department of Telecommunications and the Department of Posts. This service contributes to the largest share of Non-Tax Revenue collection/assessment for the Government of India
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Communications & IT
- **Training:** National Institute of Communication Finance (NICF), New Delhi & National Institute of Financial Management located in Faridabad

15 INDIAN RAILWAY ACCOUNTS SERVICE (IRAS)

- **Role:** IRAS officers manage the accounting and financial functions of the Indian Railways
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Railways
- **Training:** Indian Railway Institute of Financial Management (IRIFM), Secunderabad

16 INDIAN RAILWAY PERSONNEL SERVICE (IRPS)

- **Role:** IRPS officers handle the personnel management and human resource functions of the Indian Railways
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Railways
- **Training:** Training is initiated at LBSNAA and further training ensues at institutes like National Academy of Direct Taxes, RCVP Noronha Academy of Administration, Dr Marri Channa Reddy Human Resource Development Institute. Next, the training is at National Academy of Indian Railways (NAIR), Vadodara

17 INDIAN RAILWAY TRAFFIC SERVICE (IRTS)

- **Role:** IRTS officers manage the transportation and traffic operations of the Indian Railways
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Railways
- **Training Location:** Railway Staff College, Vadodara and Indian Railways Institute of Transport Management (IRITM), Lucknow

18 INDIAN TRADE SERVICE (ITR)

- **Role:** ITS officers promote and facilitate international trade, formulate trade policies, and represent India in trade negotiations
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Commerce & Industry
- **Training:** Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), New Delhi

19 RAILWAY PROTECTION FORCE (RPF)

- **Role:** Objective of this cadre is to provide security to the Indian Railway passengers and protect the property and assets of Indian Railways. It is a Paramilitary force
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Railways
- **Training:** Jagjivan Ram Railway Protection Force Academy, Lucknow

20 ARMED FORCES HEADQUARTERS CIVIL SERVICE

- **Role:** This service provides administrative support to the Armed Forces Headquarters. The Defence Secretary is the head of this cadre
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Defence
- **Training:** Training for officers in the Armed Forces Headquarters Civil Service may occur at training establishments affiliated with the Armed Forces, such as the Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) in Wellington, Tamil Nadu

21 DELHI, ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS CIVIL SERVICE (DANICS):

- **Role:** DANICS officers serve in the administrative cadre of the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) and the Union Territories (UTs) of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. They are responsible for various administrative functions, policy implementation, and public service delivery. This service acts as a feeder service to the Indian Administrative Service
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs
- **Training:** The training for DANICS officers may take place at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) in Mussoorie or other regional training institutes

22 DELHI, ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS POLICE SERVICE (DANIPS)

- **Role:** DANIPS officers serve in the police force of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCTD) and the UTs of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It is a federal police service in India, administering Delhi and the UTs
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs
- **Training:** DANIPS officers may undergo training at SVPNPA or other designated police training institutes

23 PONDICHERRY CIVIL SERVICE

- **Role:** These officers serve in the administrative cadre of Puducherry (formerly Pondicherry). They are involved in governance, public administration, and implementation of government policies and programmes
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs
- **Training:** Training for Pondicherry Civil Service officers may occur at LBSNAA or other relevant training institutes

24 PONDICHERRY POLICE SERVICE

- **Role:** These officers serve in the law enforcement agency of the UT of Puducherry. They are responsible for maintaining law and order, crime prevention, and ensuring public safety within the territory
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs
- **Training:** Training for Pondicherry Police Service officers may take place at police training institutes designated by the Ministry of Home Affairs or other relevant training establishments

AFTER THE INTERVIEW: WHAT'S NEXT?

Here is a look at the training period of candidates who have cleared the Civil Service Exam

AFTER candidates clear all three rounds of the Civil Service Examination, they are selected for the training period at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) in Mussoorie, Uttarakhand.

Trainees of the All India Civil Services, namely, Indian the Indian Administrative Service, the Indian Police Service, the Indian Forests Service, the Indian Foreign Service, and various Group A services are trained through a foundation course of 15 weeks at the academy.

The foundation course is conducted from September to December every year. According to the official website of LBSNAA, over 650 trainees undergo the foundation course every year.

Service	Institute Name	Location	Training Period
IAS	Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration	Mussoorie	2 years
IPS	Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy	Hyderabad	1 year
IFS	Sushma Swaraj Foreign Service Institute	New Delhi	2 years
IRS	National Academy of Direct Taxes	Nagpur	1 year
IFoS	Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy	Dehradun	2 years

The objective of this course is to

- Make trainees familiar with the administrative, social, political and economic environment of India
- Make trainees aware of the challenges and opportunities within the Civil Services
- Make candidates enhance their intellect, moral fortitude, physical wellness and personality
- Make candidates build a sense of camaraderie, coordination, and "esprit de corps" with each other

Subjects taught in the course include Political Science, Law, Management & Behavioural Science, Public Administration, Economics, History & Culture, and Information & Communication Technology. All-India Service trainees also have to select the language of the State cadre they are allotted to, as well as English.

After the completion, trainees of the IPS, IRS, IFS, and IFoS are sent to other institutes in India for their training. IAS trainees are to remain at LBSNAA for their training.

Gender	NUMBER OF ATTEMPTS MADE BY THE RECOMMENDED CSE 2019 CANDIDATES								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 & above	Total
Male	49	115	132	135	121	100	34	16	702
	7.0%	16.4%	18.8%	19.2%	17.2%	14.3%	4.8%	2.3%	100%
Female	22	37	50	48	34	19	6	4	220
	10.0%	16.8%	22.7%	21.8%	15.5%	8.7%	2.7%	1.8%	100%
Total	71	152	182	183	155	119	40	20	922
	7.7%	16.5%	19.7%	19.9%	16.8%	12.9%	4.3%	2.2%	100%

— Compiled by Mrittika Banerjee and Karthikeya S

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25.03.2024
MONDAY

DAY'S DIARY

Walter Tull killed

On this day, in 1918, Walter Tull, footballer and a soldier during World War One, was killed in action at during the Spring Offensive in France

EARLY LIFE

After his parents passed, Walter and his brother were sent to an orphanage in London. Here, he caught the attention of Clapton FC and joined them in October 1908

FOOTBALLERS' BATTALION

Tull joined the 17th battalion of the Middlesex Regiment, the Footballers' Battalion. He was the first black officer to lead white British soldiers into battle

LEGACY

Special coins were issued in his honour by the Royal Mint and he was inducted into the National Football Museum's Hall of Fame

CE's guide to happenings in the city

PG 2

'I WAS NERVOUS IT COULD BE A CAREER-KILLER'

MONIKA MONALISA

Best-selling author Chetan Bhagat, who was in Bengaluru recently, confesses to *CE* about being apprehensive of stepping into a genre new to him with his latest book, *11 Rules For Life: Secrets to Level Up*

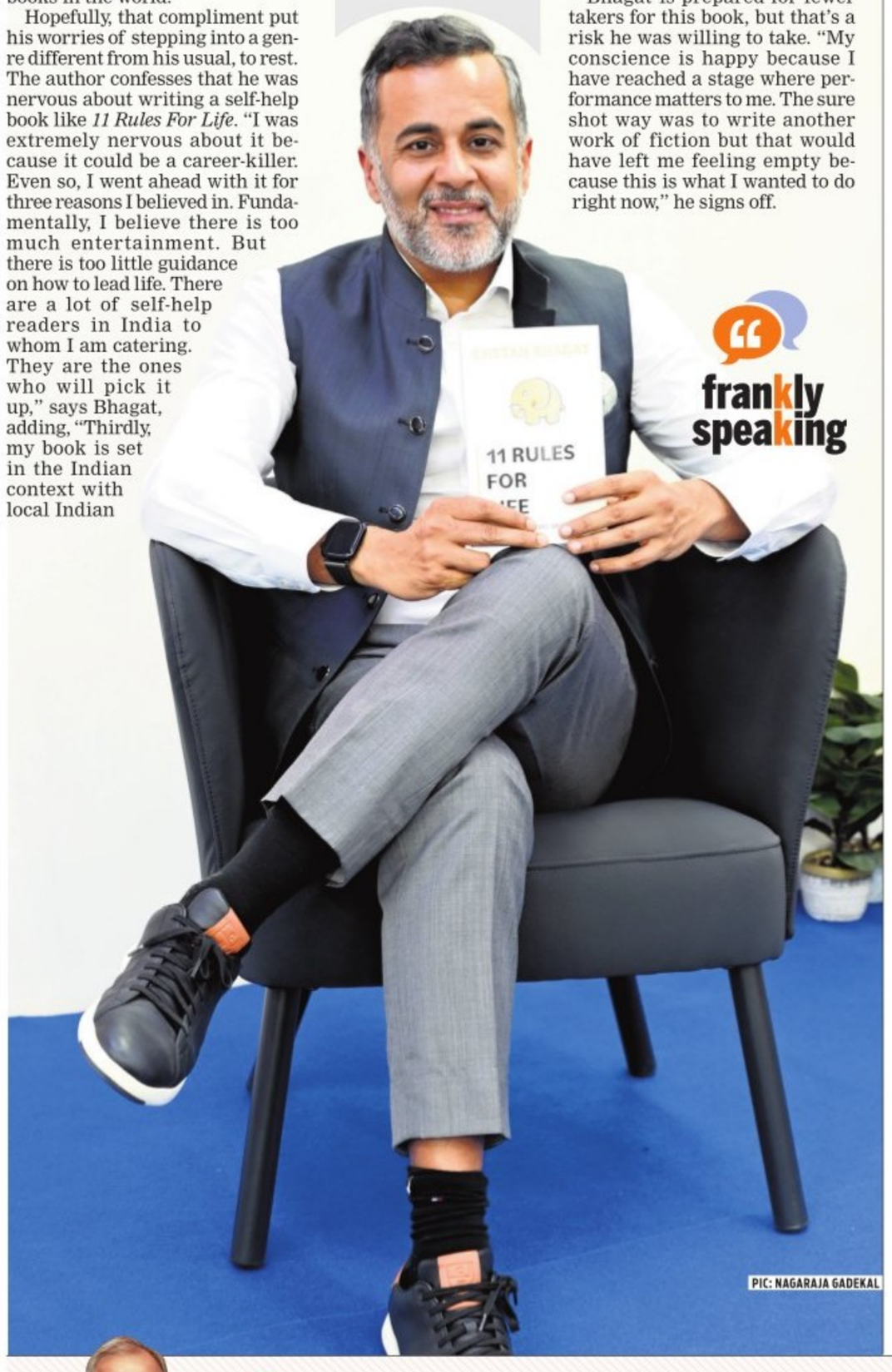
IT was a packed hall with many audience members having 'bunked' work to get a glimpse of author **Chetan Bhagat** whose works, *Five Point Someone*, *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*, and *Half Girlfriend*, have been best-selling hits despite much criticism. In fact, at the Bengaluru launch of his latest book, *11 Rules For Life: Secrets to Level Up* (HarperCollins India; ₹250), a young boy had travelled from Kalaburagi just to meet his 'favourite' author whom he compared with world best-selling writer James Clear. A visibly embarrassed Bhagat replied, "It's not a fair comparison since Clear's *Atomic Habits* is one of the highest-read non-fiction books in the world."

Hopefully, that compliment put his worries of stepping into a genre different from his usual, to rest. The author confesses that he was nervous about writing a self-help book like *11 Rules For Life*. "I was extremely nervous about it because it could be a career-killer. Even so, I went ahead with it for three reasons I believed in. Fundamentally, I believe there is too much entertainment. But there is too little guidance on how to lead life. There are a lot of self-help readers in India to whom I am catering. They are the ones who will pick it up," says Bhagat, adding, "Thirdly, my book is set in the Indian context with local Indian examples and characters."

> *The sure shot way was to write another work of fiction but that would have left me feeling empty because this is what I wanted to do right now*
>
> Chetan Bhagat, author

The book, already in its third print, can be found in the self-help section in bookstores but Bhagat calls it 'part-memoir, part-self-help, and part-fiction'. Despite the shortening attention and reading span, Bhagat says he has studied his readers to know what will work. "I know my readers – they are the Insta reel watchers who never pick up a book. They are not readers but they are 'Chetan Bhagat readers'," he quips.

Bhagat is prepared for fewer takers for this book, but that's a risk he was willing to take. "My conscience is happy because I have reached a stage where performance matters to me. The sure shot way was to write another work of fiction but that would have left me feeling empty because this is what I wanted to do right now," he signs off.



PIC: NAGARAJA GADEKAL

RETRO RAPTURE

Padma Bhushan awardee Usha Uthup with Alive India Rockstars enchant the audience with the best of pop, including a viral cover of Miley Cyrus' *Flowers* and *Darling* from *7 Khoon Maaf*, at Garuda Mall, Magrath Road on Saturday | VINOD KUMAR T

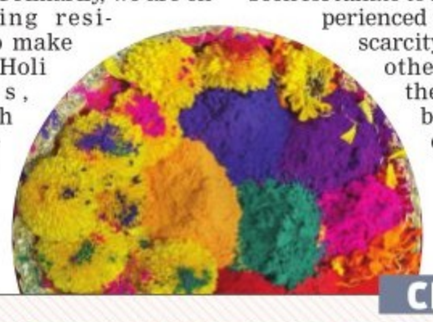
Despite severe water shortage leading to subdued Holi celebrations, B'lureans are keeping their spirits high with different ways to celebrate the festival of colours

EXPRESS FEATURES

A celebration of the arrival of spring, love and victory of good over evil, the festival of Holi is defined by exuberant water play and a riot of colours. Every year those celebrating Holi in Bengaluru take to the streets armed with powdered colours, 'gulal', and water-filled balloons and guns. Social boundaries dissolve as friends, families, and even strangers playfully drench each other in a kaleidoscope of hues. Yet this year, the spirit of the festival has taken on a subdued hue, owing to the severe water crisis faced by some parts of Bengaluru.

"In previous years, we would have celebrations throughout the day, where people would play Holi beginning in the morning and until the evening. This year, we have decided to restrict the celebrations to just two hours in the evening. Furthermore, it's going to be completely dry celebrations and with strictly organic colours," says Priyanka Roy-Sinha, who has been organising Holi celebrations at a gated community in HSR Layout. "Holi is a community-driven festival and in keeping with that spirit, we have decided to focus on other activities that the community could engage in. Primarily, we are encouraging residents to make special Holi sweets, which will be distributed among the residents and also to a few orphanages," she adds.

Similarly, residents of a gated community in JP Nagar have also gone with a 'water-free' celebration where pickharis and artificial colours are banned. "While we are facing some disruptions with our water supply, we have been fortunate to have not experienced the kind of scarcity that some other areas in the city have been experiencing. Hence, keeping that in mind, we are going with a strictly organic-colours-only celebration. These colours are much easier to wash off and don't require the same amount of water that artificial colours do," shares Pranav Shastry, a member of the community.



Meanwhile, Ananyabrata Bhakta, President BinB (Bengalis in Bengaluru), says the community has decided to forego celebrations altogether this year, in order to conserve water. "It's important to enjoy festivals but not at the cost of our precious resources. Each year, we have anywhere between 100-150 people who participate in our Holi celebrations. And each of them would need a huge amount of water to clean up after playing Holi. Hence, in view of the current water crisis, it wouldn't be feasible to celebrate and essentially waste all that water," he adds.

As the water crisis unfolded in the weeks leading up to Holi, several travel experience companies and entrepreneurs took the initiative to offer unique destinations, far removed from the urban sprawl.

These places allowed people to celebrate the festival without guilt or worry about water wastage. Many of these Holi parties even featured water as their main attraction. Ankit Bharadwaj, co-founder of Banjara and Gypsy, a travel experience company in the city, says, "We are organising two Holi parties in a couple of places, one is in the Urban Valley on Kanakapura Road for people from the Electronic City area to enjoy an outdoor Holi along with rain dance. The other one is in Indiranagar. At the Kanakpura Road one, since it's on the outskirts, there isn't much issue with water so we are doing a rain dance but in the Indiranagar one, we won't be doing any rain dances. Maybe only a few drums with water but that also depends on availability."

GRUB HUB

Aslam Gafoor (@aslamgafoor) is a hospitality professional with experience in business development, sales and marketing with well-known hotels, and food and beverage companies. A few of his passions are travel, food and wine, and he enjoys sharing these experiences as a columnist.

THE QUIZ WILL BE PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

Send answers to **engalurucityexpress@gmail.com** with the subject line **'Food quiz'** The correct answers and names of the first three respondents with right answers will be featured in *CE* on Monday. The first prize winner will win a voucher worth ₹1,000 from Nando's**

THE RIGHT ANSWERS

1) Profiterole
2) Elote
3) Souvlaki

FIRST 3 TO GET IT RIGHT

1) Pallavi BN
2) Supriya Kumar
3) Khushi Gupta

CITY READ

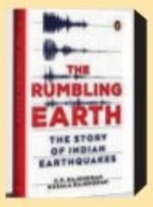
High school organises farewell for Class 10 students

Anjali Convent and Nightingale High School organised a farewell for the students of Class 10 within their school premises in Srinivasanagar. The secretary of the organisation, MS Sarala inaugurated the event where she said the yearly tuition fee of the first five rank holders will be waived, and will also be honoured with a silver chariot and parade on Independence Day. Meanwhile, the senior students presented a plaque to the school as a memento and handed over the lighting lamp to the juniors. Principal B Krishnegowda and chairman SG Gowda, also presided over the ceremony.

Walkers' Association organises musical protest

The Cubbon Park Walkers' Association in collaboration with the folk-rock band Swarathma organised a musical protest on March 24 at Cubbon Park against the proposed construction of multi-storied building in the park. The protestors have demanded that the authorities drop the construction plans and look for an alternative site for the high-rise.

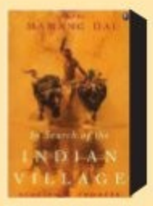
BOOK NOOK



The Rumbling Earth: The Story of Indian Earthquakes

By CP Rajendran and Kusala Rajendran

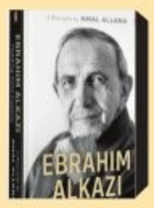
The book takes the readers to some exciting parts of India to show how earthquakes change the topography where a sea existed not far in the past—now a salt marsh—affecting social life, trade, and livelihood.



In Search of the Indian Village: Stories and Reports

Edited by Mamang Dai

The book captures the essence of rural India through the country's finest short fiction, commentary, scholarship, and reportage.



Ebrahim Alkazi's biography, HOLDING TIME CAPTIVE

By Amal Allana

From Alkazi's student years in England to his theatre movement in Bombay and Delhi, this book charts the theatre giant's meteoric rise and his unwavering commitment to put Hindi theatre on the map.

She Storms the Norms

By Anisha Motwani, Priyadarshini Narendra

Women tend to work much harder, yet they are held to higher standards and face greater obstacles when it comes to receiving their deserved recognition. It showcases the inspiring stories of women who have overcome the triple challenge of societal beliefs, structural barriers, and self-doubt.

SUNDAY FUNDAY!

Making the most out of the weekend, a father spends some quality time with his toddler at Cubbon Park on Sunday | **SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA**

QUICKFIX

INSTANT GOOSEBERRY PICKLE

INGREDIENTS

- **Gooseberry:** 250 g
- **Peppercorns:** 6
- **Salt to taste**
- **Slit green chillies:** according to taste
- **Vinegar:** 2 tbsp
- **Turmeric powder and asafoetida:** a pinch each
- **Oil:** 3-4 tbsp

FOR MASALA

- **Cummin seeds:** 1 tbsp
- **Saunf:** 1 tbsp
- **Fenugreek seeds:** 1/4 tsp
- **Mustard seeds:** 1 tsp
- **Cloves:** 2

METHOD

- Wash the gooseberry. Pat dry. Steam it for 10 minutes on medium flame till it becomes soft but not overcooked.
- When cool, remove the seed and cut it into four pieces. Keep aside.
- Lightly roast the masala ingredients. Powder it coarsely.
- In a wok, heat the oil. Switch off the gas.
- When the oil is warm, add the asafoetida powder and turmeric powder.
- In a bowl,add the slit green chillies, cut gooseberry, salt, and ground masala powder. Mix them well.
- Add the oil and vinegar.
- Mix and bottle it. It can be stored in the fridge.
- Vinegar is optional.

Contributed by **Rama Shecar,** Kochi

DR VIVEK ARORA

drvivekarora@hotmail.com

The expert is a senior veterinarian, Dr Gandhi's Pet Clinic, Delhi.

Why is my cat not using her litter box? How can I make her use it?

Felines are a shy species; we must acknowledge it and foster them around this fact. If the cat is littering outside the litter box it can be frustrating and annoying for the owner, because you just can't talk to her about such accidents! For the benefit of all our readers, the number of litter boxes in the house should be one more than the number of the cats you have. The first step is to look for the preference of your cat, with the kind of litter box she likes, some like it covered (dome shaped) while some like it open. Mere not having the preferred litter box may deter them from using one. Also, the presence of other cats in the house which can build competitiveness among them, such hostility, fear and anxiety with the housemate may cause them to do this act in distress. Sometimes the place of the litter box can be the reason, as most cats prefer litter boxes to be placed in a quiet, isolated place and not finding one at the right place can be one of the reasons. Also, they are particular about the kind of litter as well. Normally cat litter should be non-clumpy and non-smelly. See for the above cues and I am sure your cat will start to use the litter box.

ASK AN XPERT

FITBIT

MAKARASANA

(CROCODILE POSE)

In Sanskrit,'makar' means crocodile and 'asana' means posture. This asana helps alleviate stress and improve body posture. The aim of this asana is to unleash the strain caused by other poses. Makara is usually translated to crocodile, but it is also thought to be a sea creature, like a shark or dolphin, and may be a purely mythical animal. Although it is often used as a relaxation posture, it is an alternative to the supine corpse pose, in which both the head and feet are rested on the floor.

STEPS

- Lie upside down, on the belly, on the yoga mat.
- Extend your legs behind you with the tips of your feet touching the mat.
- Bend the hands, placing the elbows on the mat.
- Keep your neck straight and look forward, with your shoulders and head raised.
- Place your chin on the palms.
- Stretch your legs with your toes pointed out. Breathe normally to relax the muscles.
- To challenge yourself to a Raised Crocodile, your hands can remain under the chin, or you can place them behind the neck. Inhale, raise your legs, and upper body.
- Hold the pose until you feel completely relaxed.
- To release, gently remove your palms from your chin and bring your shoulders and head down.

LIMITATIONS

- You should not move your body during the practice.
- People who have serious back or knee injuries, deep psychological issues, suffer from high blood pressure, or are pregnant should avoid this.
- Have at least a 3-5-hour gap between practice and meal.

BENEFITS

- Makarasana is good for beginners.
- Stimulates the sacrum and improves prana flow throughout the spine, thereby removing all blockages.
- Stimulates the abdominal organs, improves digestion, and aids in problems related to constipation.
- Improves the functioning of the spleen, urinary bladder, liver, pancreas, and intestines.
- Relaxes the muscular system, giving a sense of control over the body and mind.
- Reduces the blood pressure and activates the diaphragm muscle.
- Helps with lower back stiffness and relaxes the whole body.
- Reduces the spasm and symptoms related to PMS.
- Helps with slip disc, sciatica, spondylitis, and many other types of spinal disorders.
- Useful for prolonged periods of pranayama and deep meditation.
- Helps in dealing with hypertension, heart disease, stress, fatigue, mental disorders, and health problems.
- Stretches the muscles of the abdomen, chest, and neck.
- Beneficial for muscle recovery and relaxation.

By N Elumalai, PhD Scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

WHATWHENWHYWHERE

Joy of Colours

Get ready to celebrate the festival of colours with organic colours, Dhol and DJ as you paint the town like a rainbow. Both open and closed spaces are available!

WHEN: March 25, 1pm

WHERE: Gilly's Restobar, Bannerghatta Road

DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Holi Party

Enjoy one of the largest open-air rain dance & pool parties in the city with Punjabi Dhol and celeb DJs like DJ Bassis and DJ Kyzer. Complement all of it with some delicious food & drinks.

WHEN: March 25, 12pm onwards

WHERE: Bella Ciao Resort, Jalahalli

DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Paint With Your Date

Dive into the world of art with your special someone and fill the canvas together with memories while enjoying some snacks and drinks.

WHEN: March 25, 1pm

WHERE: SmallWorld, Koramangala

DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Clay Date

Give your date a unique touch by creating memories of togetherness as you build something together, out of clay and out of love.

WHEN: March 25, 6pm

WHERE: Wheel and Potter Pottery Studio, Srinivasa Nagar

DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Art Of Texture Painting

For all the aesthetics lovers out there, put your creativity to use and create something beautiful on canvas using texture and acrylic paint.

WHEN: March 25, 4.30pm

WHERE: Art Beat, HSR Layout

DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

DJ Night

Take your friends and get ready to move your body on the hottest Bollywood hits with DJ Hassan and get special offers on beverages.

WHEN: March 26, 7pm

WHERE: Happy Brew, Koramangala

DETAILS: insider.in

Talking Politics

With elections approaching soon, engage in a conversation about election funding hosted by Prof. Trilochan Sastry, founder of the Association for Democratic Reforms and other relevant personalities.

WHEN: March 25, 6.30pm

WHERE: Bangalore International Centre, Domlur

DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Sound Meditation

Allow yourself to relax, rejuvenate, and restore balance as expert Tanmayi Bollina guides you through the soothing sounds and frequencies of Tibetan bowls.

WHEN: March 25, 5pm & 6.30pm

WHERE: Salarpuria Sattva Magnificia, Mahadevapura

DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Theatre Hour

Witness the play titled *Frenemies Forever* which explores the complex friendship and feminist views of literary icons Ismat Chughtai and Saadat Hasan Manto through interviews, dramatisations, and their writings.

WHEN: March 26, 7.30pm | **WHERE:** Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar | **DETAILS:** bookmyshow.com

EXPRESS CONNECT

HAVE A RECIPE OR ART WORK TO SHARE, OR A QUESTION TO ASK?

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ARTCORNER

SUMMER THOUGHTS

Artist Vasudevan Akkitham's oil on canvas depicts human figures placed against interior spaces plucked from the tapestry of memories. Despite the seemingly simple imagery, there's a deliberate mystery in how elements are arranged, making it a story about people, nature, and society.

Manmeet Kaur, Behram Siganporia and Dr Karishma Kagodu

Surbhi Sharma, Hari & Yashodhara Marar

SHINE ON!

RUBINATIONS
Rubi Chakravarti
Writer, actor and funny girl

RECENTLY, our staid and usually conservatively spending fellow brethren of India have gone through a marked metamorphosis. The ideals with which we the middle-aged, (sigh! there I go again admitting it), were brought up are practically redundant today. With the advent of Wi-Fi and social media, we can't fool our children into thinking that food left on our plates meant a child somewhere else in the world would go hungry! I never did understand that concept, but the guilt was overwhelming. But now, the kids will discuss the merits and demerits of governments that create a 'political' famine for poll numbers or even wage an unnecessary war!

All this brings me to the topic I must touch upon... the ultra-mega, grandiose pre-wedding celebrations of the 'first family' of India. And Lordy! What a grand spectacle it was. It turned us into a nation of voyeurs, what with people from all spectrums of life staying glued to their phones, watching the kaleidoscope of guests arriving from all parts of India and abroad. Everyone who was someone was there! I bemusedly watched as the Mark Zuckerberg(s), and Bill Gates (s) walked awkwardly with the Indian stars, politicians and head-honchos in their (errr, ahem), rather ill-fitting desi-wear. Of course, Ri-Ri performed because the hosts had acquired a major share of the cosmetic company she represents, (though I wish she had put more 'werk, werk werk' into her performance), Bollywood bigwigs actually served food and all of them danced, sang and showed their mettle. An obscure place like Jamnagar was paved, spruced up and airport ready for a slew of private planes, and the people who mattered saw India as she is meant to be seen...Glitzy, glamorous, industrious and ambitious. This was a PR exercise par excellence...

India shining? Indeed! Namma ooru was not to be left behind. It should be renamed from 'pubcity' to 'way too many pubs in the city'! Everybody and their uncle is launching or re-launching an eatery or a pub. The diaspora of places like Koramangala and Indiranagar has completely changed. There is hardly any place for people to live! So investors and owners have been moving to the city outskirts, which is a wise idea if only the infrastructure of our city wasn't so pathetic. I had heard great things about a new pan-Asian restaurant called EIGHT. But alas! It was situated in the Mall of Asia, my old nemesis! Anyway, I invited a close group of friends to dine with me at the restaurant and I was pleasantly surprised when they all promptly agreed. I certainly must be more popular than I thought. Needless to say, the superlative food and company, coupled with exemplary service made sure the dinner was a sure-shot-winner. Especially, if one has the ability to have meaningful conversations and authentic 'catch-ups', then the evening abounds with a special aura of empathy and joie-de-vivre.

I have solemnly promised that I would visit the new 'kid-on-the-block' Virat Kohli's One-8-Commune which has been in my neighbourhood for a long time now. My opportunity came in the form of an invitation to the opening of a new cocktail bar that they opened up on the top floor. The bar was packed with familiar faces, the cocktails were fabulous, the food was great, and the place was full of shiny-young-people.

India-shining? Of course!

(The writer's views are personal)

It's berry delicious

SHRUTHI HEMACHANDRAN

ONE cannot ignore the burst of euphoria which strawberries offer with their perfect balance of sweet and sour notes. The seductive colour of romance adds a twist to the scarce aroma of nuttiness and complements the scrumptious fruit.

Interestingly, its achenes – the tiny, sometimes yellowish or brownish specks – are considered the real fruits, which are rich in fibre. Each of these achene is a fruit, inside of which is a seed. That means a single, medium-sized strawberry would have close to 200 achenes. Strawberries come under the Rosaceae (Rose) family and go by the scientific name, Fragaria x ananassa.

With the summer upon us, the red delights are also a common sight in the markets. So without much adieu, let's look into the fruit in detail.

Past perfect

Strawberries have a vast and deep-rooted history. They are native to temperate regions of the northern hemisphere and its cultivation is believed to have begun during the late 18th century at Brittany in France.

However, wild strawberries were common across the world. It is said that in North America, native Americans used the fruit in many recipes.

Strawberries made their literary debut through ancient Roman literature as early as 234 BC for the plant's medicinal use like preventing bad breath and relieving melancholy.

Its pictorial version was first printed in 1484. The French began planting strawberries in thier gardens as early as the 14th century for its beauty.

Brief resistance

During a period in the 12th century, St Hildegard of Bingen, known for her botanical and medicinal works, claimed strawberries were unfit to consume, as they grew closer to the ground.

Its initial popularity then came to a standstill. Later, the wild superstition around the fruit was put to rest after Carl Linnaeus, a Swedish biologist, prescribed himself a 'strawberry-only' diet. Interestingly, he was the one who gave the strawberry its species name Fragaria.

India's tryst with berry

India's relationship with strawberries dates back to the early 19th century. Lord Auckland, the governor-general in 1836-42, is believed to have grown the first modern strawberries in India. However, it is also said that the fruit grew in the Himalayas way before the British's arrival in India.

Anyhow, the Thane jail was one of the first places where a good amount of acclimatisation was carried out, courtesy of the prisoners who engaged in hard labour, paving the way to many success stories of strawberry cultivation in and around the region.

Mahabaleshwar, a popular hill station around 230km from the Thane Jail in Maharashtra, is known as the Strawberry Garden of India.

The most grown varieties of strawberries are Winter Dawn, Sweet Charlie, Nabila and Camrose. Pune contributes to almost 80 per cent of strawberry production in India.

As we come close to the history and biological aspects of the fruit, let's quickly delve into the scrumptious part. Take a look at the recipes we have presented for you. They are 'berry' delicious!

STRAWBERRY GIN SMASH

INGREDIENTS:
- Gin: 60ml
- Fresh strawberries: 5
- Simple syrup: 15ml
- Egg white: 1

METHOD
Cut strawberries in to cubes and put them in a shaker. Muddle gently, add simple syrup, gin and egg white into the shaker. Shake it dry. Add ice cubes and shake again nicely. Pour the mix into a cocktail glass. Garnish with strawberries.

NO-PRESERVATIVE STRAWBERRY JAM

INGREDIENTS
- Fresh strawberries: 2-3 cups as per size
- Sugar: as per choice
- Fresh lemon juice: half teaspoon

METHOD:
Add finely chopped strawberries into a large pot kept over a medium flame. Mash them and add sugar and lemon. Stir continuously to avoid lumps forming. Cook until the pulp thickens and stops sticking to the pan. Can be stored for 2-3 months in the fridge.

STRAWBERRY BASIL FIZZ

INGREDIENTS
- Fresh strawberries: 5
- Basil leaves: 3
- Lemon juice: 15ml
- Honey: 30ml

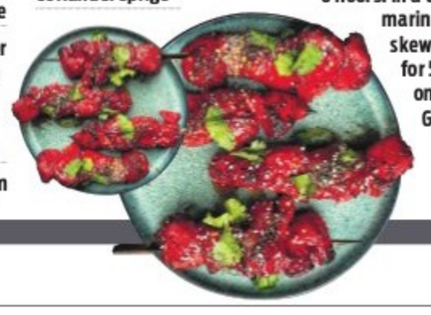
METHOD
Add strawberries and basil leaves in hurricane glass and muddle gently. Add the rest of the ingredients into a glass. Add crushed ice and top up with soda water. Garnish with a slice of lemon and a strawberry.

STRAWBERRY CHICKEN SKEWERS

INGREDIENTS:
- Boneless chicken cubes: 500gm
- Strawberries: 300gm
- Yogurt: 120gm
- Garlic paste: 5gm
- Lemon juice: 10ml
- Salt: To taste
- White pepper powder: 5gm
- Mustard paste: 5gm
- Oregano: To taste
- Paprika powder: 10gm
- Olive oil: 80ml
- Skewer sticks

For garnish:
- White sesame seeds
- Black sesame seeds
- Coriander sprigs

METHOD:
Boil the strawberries until tender. Blend them into smooth paste. Marinate the chicken cubes with strawberry paste and all ingredients. Arrange the marinated chicken in the skewer stick and leave it to rest for 5 to 6 hours. In a tawa, grill the marinated chicken skewer using olive oil for 5 to 8 minutes on medium heat. Garnish with roasted sesame seeds and coriander sprigs.



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS **CLASSIFIEDS**

PUBLIC NOTICE
CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Mrs. S.K.FIRDOUSE** D/o Late. Mahaboob Basha W/o Mr. Mohammed Javeed Ahamed Siddiqui aged about 32 years R/a No.1/1-1, 3rd Floor, 4th Cross, RBI Extension Jayanagar 3rd Block Bengaluru - 560011. In Aadhaar Card (No.672263147165) my name is entered as Mohammed Sana. Above both names one and the same i.e.my name only. I declare that my name will be same as **S.K.FIRDOUSE** for all official purposes in future vide affidavit dt 22.03.2024 and I Sworn before Notary and Advocate Mamatha.N.K. Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **JYOTI SHAMANTH POOJARI**, W/o Shamanth Kumar B S, residing at No.101, Sri Nilayam, 3rd Floor, 5th Right Cross, 1st Main, Alfa Garden, Kodigehalli Main Road, K.R.Puram, Bengaluru-560036, declare that I have changed my name from **JYOTIKUMARI POOJARI** to **JYOTI SHAMANTH POOJARI**, henceforth I shall be known and called as **JYOTI SHAMANTH POOJARI** only for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 22-03-2024, sworn before Advocate and Notary **G. RAJENDRA** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, (OLD NAME) VARUNA PRAKASH SRIVASTAVA Residing at No.103, Krishna Symphony Apts, Banjara Layout, Horamavu, Bangalore - 560043, have changed my name from **(OLD NAME) VARUNA PRAKASH SRIVASTAVA** to **(NEW NAME) VARUNA TANDON** vide affidavit dated 23.03.2024 sworn before Notary Uday Kumar.K Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **LAKSHMIDEVI C** (Old Name), W/o of CHELUVARAJU K, residing at 16/1 Avalahalli Main Road, Byatarayanapura, Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560026, Karnataka, India, changed my name from **LAKSHMIDEVI C** to **LAKSHMIDEVI CHELUVARAJU** vide affidavit dated 19.03.2024, sworn before Notary, Sumithra N; Henceforth, I shall be known as **LAKSHMIDEVI CHELUVARAJU** for all purposes.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **BASAVARAJ**, aged about 36 years, S/o Veeranagouda, Residing at No. Sobha Arena- The Plaza, Unit No - J-5124, Thalaghattapura Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Thalaghattapura, Talaghatapura Bengaluru-560062, Karnataka, India, have changed my name from **BASAVARAJ** to **BASAVARAJ PATIL**, vide affidavit dated 23-03-2024 sworn before notary B.K.R Krishnamurthy, Reg. No.1351, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SHOBHA KRISHNAPPA** W/o Jagannath Munivenkatappa R/o No. 02, 1ST A Main, 7TH Cross BTM 2nd Stage, Rastra Kavi Kuvempu Nagar, N S Palya, Bangalore - 560076, have permanently changed my name from **SHOBHA KRISHNAPPA** to **SHOBHA JAGANNATH**, vide affidavit dated 22/03/2024, sworn before notary L.Puttaraju, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SHINEY MALITA**, D/o Kiran Kumar, R/o Poojarappa Building Srirampura, Bangalore North Jakkur, Bangalore – 560064 have permanently changed my name from **SHINEY MALITA** to **SHINEY MALITA KUMAR**, vide affidavit dated 22/03/2024, sworn before notary L Puttaraju, Bangalore.

AFFIDAVIT
I, **Mr. BHARATHESH M.M**, Aged about 32 years, S/o. Sri. Mruthyunjaya M.S, residing at No. 61, 3rd Main, 1st Cross, H.H.R.W.A., Subramanyapura, Bengaluru - 560 061, Karnataka, do hereby declare that my correct name is **Mr. BHARATHESH M.M** in my Birth Certificate and in my PAN Card my name mentioned as **Bharathesh** and in my Passport my name mentioned as **Mr. BHARATHESH** & **Surname** mentioned as my initial expansion form of **M.M - Mruthyunjaya Mysoremath.** I hereby declare that above the names pertain to the one and same person that is **Mr. BHARATHESH M.M** vide affidavit dated 21.03.2024 sworn to before B.K.R. Krishnamurthy, Advocate and Notary, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **MOHAMED YUSOOF** S/O. Noor Ahmed and Asharaf, holder of Passport No. H0716142, born on 1/6/1977 at Gonibeed Karnatka, passport issued at Bangalore on 22/9/2008 valid till 21/9/2018, resident of SM Street and Chatra, Chikmagalur. 577101, presently at No. 204, Anjanadri Erclave 2nd cross, Syed Block, Vibuthipura, Vimanapura, Bangalore. 560017, have changed my name from **MOHAMED YUSOOF** to **MOHAMMED YUSOOF,** vide affidavit dated 05/10/2023 sworn to before C.V.Earappa advocate and notary Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, SAVITA alias SAVITHA SANAP (DOB: 24-07-1988) W/o Mr. Sanap Ravkiran Ashok Resident of : Permanent R/o: No. 5770, Zarekar Galli, Nalegaon, Ahmadnagar, Maharashtra-414001 and at present residing at: #01, Shivanna Complex, Kodagalahatt, Hunasamaranahalli Post, Bangalore- 562157, have changed my name from **SAVITA alias SAVITHA SANAP** to **SAVITA RAVIKIRAN SANAP** vide Affidavit Dated 23-03-2024 sworn to before Notary Public G.P. CHAYA, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Mrs. ARUNA VINAY,** W/o N Vinay Kumar, age 37 years, R/at No. 14, Ward No.7, 1st Main, 2nd Cross, Venkategowda Layout, Hebbal, Kempapura, Bangalore North PO HA Farm, Bengaluru-560 024, Karnataka do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **ARUNA KUMARI SHASHIDHARA** & **ARUNA KUMARI .S** to **ARUNA VIJAY**, henceforth I shall be known and called as **ARUNA VIJAY** only for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 22nd March 2024, sworn before Advocate and Notary **L B ANASUYAMMA** at Bangalore.

NAME DECLARATION
I, **REKHA MODANI** Alias **REKHA DEVI MODANI,** W/o R.Venu Gopal Modani, aged 49 years, Presently R/at # 70, 10th Main Road, J.C.Nagar, Kurubarahalli, Mahalakshmipuram Layout, Bangalore - 560086.
In my all documents mentioned my name as **"REKHA MODANI "** and my name is mentioned L.I.C. Bond, as **"REKHA DEVI MODANI"** above Mentioned both Names **"REKHA MODANI" & "REKHA DEVI MODANI"** is the name of one & same person only. vide Sworn Affidavit dated **23.03.2024** before **H.R.Karunakara,** Advocate and Notary Public Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, (OLD NAME) SUDHA MARIA AUXILIATORA Residing at No 6/3, Murgesh Mudalair Road, Pulakeshi Nagar, Frazer Town, Bengaluru-560005, have changed my name from **(OLD NAME) SUDHA MARIA AUXILIATORA** to **(NEW NAME) MARIA SUJATHA** vide affidavit dated 23.03.2024 sworn before Notary Prasad Shetty K.B., Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **PRAKASH** (Old Name), S/o of CHELUVARAJU K, residing at 16/1 Avalahalli Main Road, Byatarayanapura, Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560026, Karnataka, India, changed my name from **PRAKASH** to **PRAKASH CHELUVARAJU** vide affidavit dated 19.03.2024, sworn before Notary, Sumithra N; Henceforth, I shall be known as **PRAKASH CHELUVARAJU** for all purposes.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, VINAYAK NARAYAN BHATT, S/o.Narayan Bhatt, age about 41 years, Residing at : No.1004,C-Block, Aryan Opulence, Uttarahalli Main Road, Rajarajeshwarinagar, Bengaluru-98. do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **VINAYAK BHATT TO VINAYAK NARAYAN BHATT,**. vide affidavit dated 22/03/2024 sworn before advocate & Notary S.R. ThulasiKrishna, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **BHARATI KORI** W/o Gurupadappa B, R/o No. 71/4, Kanakapura Main Road Jaraganahalli, JP Nagar Bangalore - 560078, have permanently changed my name from **BHARATI KORI** to **BHARATHI GURUBASAPPA KORI**, vide affidavit dated 22/03/2024, sworn before notary L.Puttaraju, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SAI NETRA RAMESH AJJAMPUR**, aged about 28 years, D/o. Mr. Ramesh Narasanna Ajjampur, residing at No. 19, 1st Main, 5th Cross, College Teachers Layout, Banashakari 3rd Stage, Bangalore-560085, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **SAI NETRA RAMESH** to **SAI NETRA RAMESH AJJAMPUR**, vide affidavit dated 23.03.2024, sworn to before Mohammed Hussain, Advocate & Notary, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Smt Kavitha,** D/o Mr. Puttaswamy aged about 31 years, residing at No.224, 4th Cross, Near Government School, Jakkur Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore-560064, Yelahanka Taluk, is declaring that I have changed my **minor daughter's name from Saanvi Chauhan B.I. to Saanvi Chaitanya K** sworn before the **Notary Sri S.R. Ravikumar on 05.02.2024**

AFFIDAVIT
I, **LOKESH**, S/o Kalaiah, aged 45 years, residing at No.40/2, 2nd Main Road, 10th Cross, Kanakanagar, Moodalapalya, Near Hanuman Temple, Bangalore North, Nagarabhavi, Bangalore-72, declare that both the names i.e. **LOKESH** and **NANJAPPA .K** are one and the same and refers to me only, henceforth I shall be known and called as **LOKESH** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 22-03-2024, sworn before Advocate and Notary **Smt. VATSALA** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **HARINI SATISH** R/at No.544, 7th Main Road, 5th Block, 1st Stage Behind Forest Office, HBR Layout, Kalayanagar, Bangalore-560043, have changed my name to **HARINI SATISH ANAND** vide affidavit Dated: 22/03/2024 Before Notary **B.S.Hemanth Kumar** Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **GEETHA S** (Old Name), D/o of SOMANNA, residing at 16/1 Avalahalli Main Road, Byatarayanapura, Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560026, Karnataka, India, changed my name from **GEETHA S** to **GEETHA ANAND** vide affidavit dated 19.03.2024, sworn before Notary, Sumithra N; Henceforth, I shall be known as **GEETHA ANAND** for all purposes.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **ANAND C** (Old Name), S/o of CHELUVARAJU K, residing at 16/1 Avalahalli Main Road, Byatarayanapura, Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560026, Karnataka, India, changed my name from **ANAND C** to **ANAND CHELUVARAJU** vide affidavit dated 19.03.2024, sworn before Notary, Sumithra N; Henceforth, I shall be known as **ANAND CHELUVARAJU** for all purposes.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Ashwin Acharya Balebail** R/at No. 729, 6th Cross, 2nd Block, BSK 1st Stage, Bengaluru - 560 050, hereby declare that I have changed my name from **Ashwin Balebail Acharya** to **ASHWIN ACHARYA BALEBAIL** in my future records, deeds, writings, proceedings, transactions, private as well as upon all occasions whatsoever vide affidavit dated 22.03.2024 sworn before Advocate & Notary P. N. Nagesh, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **PRAVEEZ AHMED** S/o BAQASH, R/o No. 146, 2nd Main, 2nd Cross, M S Palya Vidyaranyapura, Bangalore - 560097, have permanently changed my name from **PRAVEEZ AHMED** to **PARVEEZ AHMED**, vide affidavit dated 22/03/2024, sworn before notary L.Puttaraju, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **VICTOR EZRA DEVASAHAYA ALBERTS**, S/o W.E. Albert, residing at No.3, New No. B 19, 5th Cross, Anchamma Street, Near Government School, Puttenahalli Palya, J.P. Nagar 7th Phase, VTC, Bangalore South, Post Office J.P. nagar, Bangalore-560078, have changed my name as **VICTOR ALBERT,** vide affidavit dated 22-03-2023 before Notary Public **ARAVIND PATIL G.G.**, B'lore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, KUSHALA CHINMAYI K.K, Aged about 21 years, D/o. Kemparaju residing at No. 105, Sri. Rama Samartha, Opposite Milk Dairy VTC Cheemasansandra, Virgonagar post, Bengaluru East, I declare that in my passport my name is required to mentioned as **KRISHNAPPA KEMPARAJU KUSHAL CHINMAYI** and my father name to be mentioned as **KRISHNAPPA KEMPARAJU.,** vide affidavit dated 15/3/2024 sworn to before Srinatha. D.R advocate and notary Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **ANEESH DEV GURRAM,** residing at No. 17/2 Vani Vilas Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560004. do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **ANEESH GURRAM** (old Name) to **ANEESH DEV GURRAM,** (New Name) henceforth I shall be known and called as **ANEESH DEV GURRAM** only, vide affidavit dated 22-03-2024, sworn before Advocate and Notary **B. CHITRA** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SHLOKA D RAJ** D/o Devaraju B D R/at No.789, Arakere Main Road, Opp Aishwarya Bakery, Arakere Bengaluru- 560076 have changed my name to **SHLOKA DEVARAJU** vide affidavit dated: 22/3/2024 Before Notary **M.K.Devaki** Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **HARSHITHA P** (Old Name), D/o of PRAKASH, residing at 16/1 Avalahalli Main Road, Byatarayanapura, Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560026, Karnataka, India, changed my name from **HARSHITHA P** to **HARSHITHA PRAKASH** vide affidavit dated 19.03.2024, sworn before Notary, Sumithra N; Henceforth, I shall be known as **HARSHITHA PRAKASH** for all purposes.

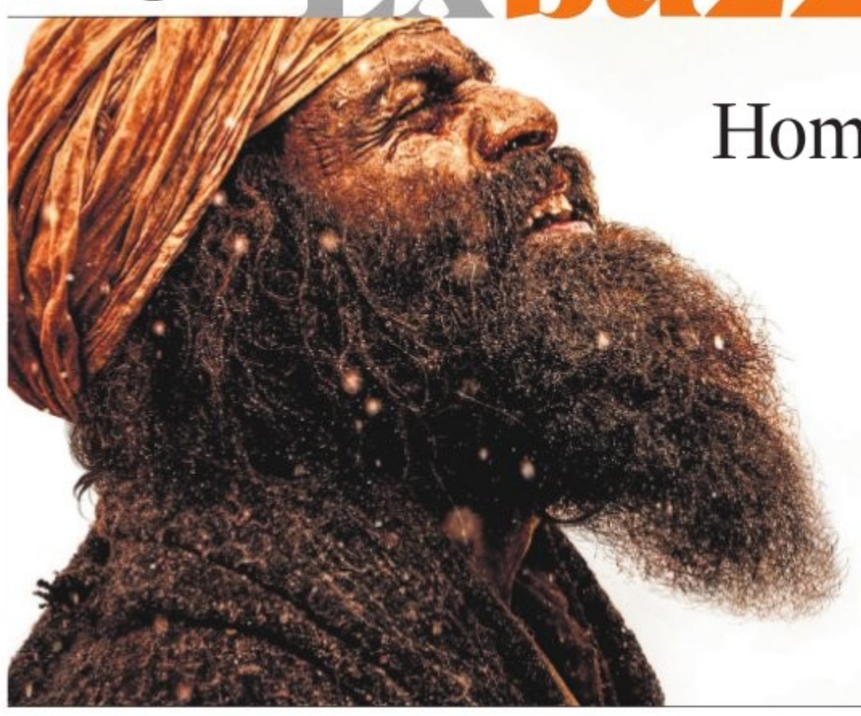
CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SAROJA** (Old Name), W/o of PRAKASH, residing at 16/1 Avalahalli Main Road, Byatarayanapura, Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560026, Karnataka, India, changed my name from **SAROJA** to **SAROJA PRAKASH** vide affidavit dated 19.03.2024, sworn before Notary, Sumithra N; Henceforth, I shall be known as **SAROJA PRAKASH** for all purposes.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, PREETHAM BHARATHIPURA SRINIVAS, S/o Bharathipura Mayanna Srinivas, residing at Bharathipura village, Billanakote post, Sompura Hobli, Nelamangala Taluk, Bangalore Rural District-562111, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **PREETHAM BARATHIPURA SRINIVAS** to **PREETHAM BHARATHIPURA SRINIVAS,** vide affidavit dated 21-03-2024, sworn before Advocate and Notary **R. LAKSHMINARAYANA** at Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **MAHANTESH JAMAKANDI** S/o Jagadeesh, R/o No. 2/1, R K Mansion, 1st cross, Mahaganapathi Nagar, Gottigere, Bannerghatta Main Road, Bangalore – 560083, have permanently changed my name from **MAHANTESH JAMAKANDI** to **ADHITYA JAGADISH JAMAKHANDI**, vide affidavit dated 22/03/2024, sworn before notary L Puttaraju, Bangalore.

AFFIDAVIT
I, **DARSHAN KUMAR C JAIN**, S/o. Chetan Prakash Jain, Aged about 20 years, Residing at # 41/12, Kanchana Apartment, 3rd Floor, Akkipet Main Road, Chickpet, Bangalore - 560 053, do hereby declare that my name is called as **DARSHAN KUMAR C JAIN** (mentioned in my Aadhar Card & PAN Card) and **DARSHAN KUMAR** (mentioned in my Passport) both the names belong to me only & the names are one and the same. Presently for all identification proofs, I am called as **DARSHAN KUMAR C JAIN** vide affidavit dated 22.03.2024 sworn to before Mamatha N.K, Advocate & Notary Public, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Mrs. HARSHA CHARAN KUMAR** aged about 35 years, W/o CHARAN KUMAR, residing at #75, 7th Cross, Muneshwara Nagara, Attur Layout, Veerasagar Main Road, Yelahanka New Town, Bangaluru-560064, have changed my name from **HARSHA S KUMAR** to **HARSHA CHARAN KUMAR,** vide affidavit dated 19/3/2024 sworn to before S R Ravikumar advocate and notary Bangalore.



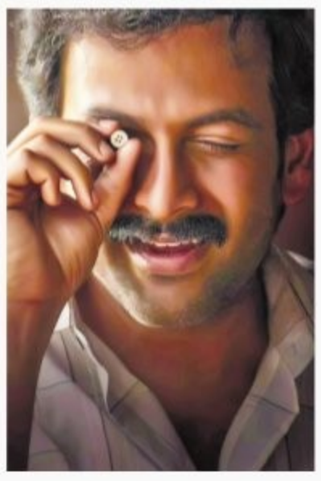
Hombale Films to distribute *Aadujeevitham* in Karnataka

This reciprocal arrangement not only strengthens ties within the industry but also ensures that audiences across regions can enjoy a diverse range of quality cinema

Hombale Films

CE FEATURES

IN a much-anticipated move, Vijay Kiragandur's Hombale Films is set to distribute the highly awaited film *Aadujeevitham - The Goat Life,* in Karnataka. The announcement was made by the production house recently. Starring noted actors, Prithviraj Sukumaran, and Amala Paul, and directed by Blessy, Aadujeevitham has music composed by veteran music composer, AR Rahman. Scheduled for release on March 28th, the film is already generating significant curiosity among audiences.



According to a statement from Hombale Films, *Aadujeevitham* is a film that promises to captivate hearts and minds with its compelling narrative and stellar performances. This sentiment reflects the anticipation surrounding the film, which has garnered attention for its intriguing storyline and talented cast.

The statement further reads that Hombale Films has established a fruitful understanding with Prithviraj Productions, who has previously distributed successful films such as *KGF: Chapters 1 & 2, Kantara* and *Salaar* in Kerala. This collaboration highlights the commitment of both production houses to foster strong relationships within the film industry.

"This reciprocal arrangement not only strengthens ties within the industry but also ensures that audiences across regions can enjoy a diverse range of quality cinema. The partnership signifies a strategic alignment aimed at delivering compelling content to audiences and expanding the reach of both production houses," the official statement reads.

HAPPY GILMORE SEQUEL IN THE WORKS

CE FEATURES

HAPPY Gilmore star Christopher McDonald said in a recent interview that the screenplay for a sequel to the 1996 comedy film, starring Adam Sandler in the lead role, is being written. "I saw Adam about two weeks ago, and he says to me, 'McDonald, you're gonna love this,'" McDonald told Audacy's show 92.3 The Fan. "I said, 'What?' He says, 'How about that?' and he shows me the first draft of Happy Gilmore 2."

According to reports, *Happy Gilmore part II* would be a Netflix film, as there is a deal in place between Sandler and his production house Happy Madison with the streamer. The 1996 film revolves around Sandler's Gilmore, a hockey player who is volatile and considered a failure in the sport, and his grandmother who is facing eviction.

Dennis Dugan directed the film from a Tim Herlihy and Sandler screenplay. It also starred Julie Bowen of Modern Family as well as the late Carl Weathers and Bob Barker.

Vasishta Simha's look from *VIP* unveiled

CE FEATURES

VASISHTA Simha's *VIP*, directed by Brahma, is nearing completion, with just two songs and a fight sequence left to shoot. Meanwhile, the first look of Vasishta's character has been unveiled by Nirmalananda Swamiji, suggesting that the film might be aiming for a broader audience appeal. The film is set to be an action-packed drama, with stunt masters Arjun, and Vikram Mor, choreographing stunts, and Shiva designing the fight sequences. Reportedly, the actor will portray multiple roles, including that of a professor. The film's title, which stands for 'Vengeance in Progress' is a crime thriller with a non-linear narrative.

VIP is produced by RS Mohan Kumar and R Achyutha Rao under the Kalasrushti Productions banner. The film stars Afzal, who serves as an executive producer and plays a significant role. The cast also includes Thejaswini Sharma as the female lead, along with Bala Rajwadi, Sunil Puranik, and Sparsha Rekha in pivotal roles. Cinematography for the film is handled by Rajeev Ganeshan, with music composed by Raghavan Kartik.

Vasishta Simha

'I PREFER TO REMAIN A VERSATILE ACTOR'

A SHARADHAA

CERTAIN actors possess a unique potential to breathe life into the roles they take up. One such notable artiste is Kishore, who not only carries films on his shoulders but also adds an essence that enriches the overall narrative, even if he only plays a supporting role.

Known for his multilingual versatility, Kishore effortlessly transcends into diverse roles, from protagonist to antagonist and other prominent characters. He acknowledges the importance of selecting roles that resonate with him personally, recognising the pivotal characters that shape his career path. The actor explains, "Many roles are offered, but it is up to me to recognise what fits me best and choose them. It is tricky, sometimes. Once we start making our own contributions to a character, filmmakers find it easier to effectively convey certain themes through specific actors. They look to us actors as the face of the character they've written, making their storytelling process seamless. Finally, in storytelling, we become tools through which directors develop the narrative. How each tool is utilised depends on their vision," says the actor.

While many may recall his impactful performance as a forest officer in *Kantara*, Kishore is set to captivate audiences yet again with a significant role in *Yuva,* backed by Vijay Kiragandur's Hombale Films. Starring Yuvarajkumar, the film, directed by Santhosh Ananddram, hits theatres this week.

Kishore is all set to be seen as a wrestling coach in *Yuva*. "Wrestling as a sport is not so popular in India, and one of the reasons I picked this script was to understand the dynamics of this sport," he explains. "In the process, I had the opportunity to work with Yuvarajkumar, and I admired his commitment to the character. He has learned a lot during his short stint, particularly in the episodes, where he shares screen with me, and when he deals with the sports scenes. Despite the fictitious nature of the film, he has put in a tremendous amount of hard work. I always appreciate actors who are committed. The more authentic the lead actor, the more appealing it will be to the audience, and Yuvarajkumar has truly immersed himself in the character. Perhaps, this portrayal by the lead actor might even inspire some to take up wrestling seriously," he says.

A still from the film

Reflecting on his own preparation for the role, Kishore remarks, "I didn't have much homework to do for the role, but I was fortunate to be surrounded by a few real-life wrestlers, some of whom have also acted in the film. I learned a few tips from them, including the technical jargon used by wrestling coaches."

Expressing his preferences in film genres, Kishore asserts, "I'm not for mass commercial entertainers; I don't fit into that bracket. I resonate with films that weave together different elements, creating experiences that resonate with a broad audience. At this stage of my career, I prefer to remain a versatile actor."

Kishore has his plate full as he mentions a number of projects in the pipeline. "I have a horror film titled *5*, directed by Vikram, in which I once again portray the role of a police officer. The role of a police officer hasn't grown stale for me; I enjoy it," he chuckles. "Additionally, I'm working on a film with director Supreet, based on Yakshagana. There's another project, a social drama titled *Gutka,* directed by Ganesh Hedge, with *Pedro* director Natesh Hegde playing one of the leads. These are all interesting projects, and I relish portraying diverse roles," he concludes.

Kishore

....says actor Kishore as he talks about the importance of taking up diverse roles, his character in his upcoming film *Yuva*, and more the dedication of debutant actor Yuvarajkumar,

Netflix confirms release date for Benedict Cumberbatch's *Eric*

CE FEATURES

Netflix has announced the release date for the upcoming web series *Eric*, starring Benedict Cumberbatch in the lead role. The emotional thriller, which also stars Gaby Hoffmann and McKinley Belcher III in key roles, will hit the streamer on May 30. Dan Fogler, Clarke Peters, Ivan Morris Howe, Phoebe Nicholls, David Denman, Bamar Kane, Adepero Odyue, Alexis Molnar, and Roberta Colindrez, round out the supporting cast of Eric.

The official logline of the series reads, "Set in 1980s New York, Eric is an emotional thriller from Abi Morgan following the desperate search of a father when his nine-year-old son disappears one morning on the way to school."

The six part series is created by Abi Morgan, who also serves as the executive producer. Lucy Forbes has helmed and executive produced the series. Cumberbatch, Morgan, Jane Featherstone, and Lucy Dyke also serve as executive producers.

David Ayer roped in as director for *Heart of the Beast*

CE FEATURES

DAVID Ayer has signed up for *Heart of the Beast*, a Paramount Pictures film. Olivia Hamilton and Damien Chazelle are producing the film under their banner Wild Chickens Productions as part of a deal they signed with Paramount Pictures. Ayer is also in the production team, alongside his Cedar Park Entertainment partner Chris Long. Cameron Alexander is the screenwriter for the film.

Heart of the Beast follows an erstwhile SEAL team member and his dog as they make their way back into a civilised society after an accident in the wilderness of Alaska. Ayer is not directing a military-related project for the first time; he helmed the WW II film Fury before. He is fresh from the success of The Beekeeper, with Jason Statham in the lead role. He is also attached to the Statham-starrer Levon's Trade in a director's capacity.